

Iraq: U.N. inspector a U.S. 'agent'

BAGHDAD (R) — U.N. weapons inspectors visited more sites in Iraq on Saturday as an official newspaper called a senior member of the international monitoring team "a spy and agent" of the United States.

Al Jumhuriya daily lashed out at Nils Carlstrom, director of the Baghdad Monitoring and Verification Centre, for a statement this week in which he criticised the Iraqi government for putting up a sign reading "Down with America" at an airport used by inspectors.

"What has made this Swedish [man] to lose his temper and condemn a slogan? ... This issue proves Iraq's charges that the [U.N.] Special Commission consists of spies and agents," Jumhuriya said in a front page editorial.

"When I go to Habbaniya airport as new inspectors are coming, there is a sign which says, 'Down with USA' ... I am sad personally seeing that sign... if you can tell the government and officials to take that sign away," Mr. Carlstrom told on Thursday an Iraqi culture and information ministry guide who took Western reporters to the inspectors' headquarters in Baghdad.

"His intervention and condemnation is a clear breach of the nature of his work and a confirmation that he is biased to America in its dispute with Iraq," the paper said.

Baghdad sparked a tense standoff with the U.N. on Oct. 29 when it banned Americans from U.N. arms inspection teams, saying they were spying for Washington.

Iraq reversed its decision last week after Russian mediation and a U.S. military buildup in the Gulf.

UNSCOM has 'not dared' visit presidential sites — Iraq

DUBAI (AFP) — Iraq said Saturday that U.N. arms experts have so far not dared to try to inspect presidential sites because such action would be in violation of a June 1996 accord.

The inspectors of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of disarming Iraq have "resumed their work normally and so far not dared" to try to enter presidential sites, said Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf.

He told the Emirati newspaper Al Itihad that it would be "in violation of existing accords between Iraq and the former UNSCOM chief, Rolf Ekeus."

A June 1996 accord called for Iraq to provide unrestricted access for UNSCOM to visit all suspected weapons sites, while the Special Commission agreed to respect Iraqi sovereignty in carrying out its work.

Mr. Sahhaf said Baghdad still expected the U.S. to push UNSCOM into trying to visit "sensitive" sites "so as not to appear to have lost" its confrontation with Iraq.

The United Nations on Friday rejected an Iraqi offer to allow invited delegates into presidential sites, saying it "does not meet the requirement for inspections as spelled out by the [U.N.] Security Council."

Iraqi said Wednesday it was denying access to "sensitive" sites but has issued invitations to 117 international observers.

"Security Council resolutions require Iraq to allow the inspectors to go wherever they need to go, any time they need to go there," U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

The inspectors headed out for Iraqi sites for the eighth consecutive day on Saturday but it was not clear if they planned to include any "sensitive" sites which Baghdad has maintained were off-limits.

Iraq and the U.S. are at loggerheads over United Nations' inspections of Iraqi weapons.

Baghdad says it has no more weapons to hide while the U.S. and the U.N. say Baghdad is still concealing biological and chemical weapons.

A clean bill of health is needed from the U.N. Special Commission, in charge of arms inspections, before trade sanctions are lifted.

U.N. Secretary-General

Kofi Annan decided on Friday against recommending a specific increase in the amount of oil that Iraq could sell in the next six months to buy food.

Diplomats in New York announced Mr. Annan's decision soon after Iraq said it was cutting food rations for December because it had not received sufficient supplies under the oil-for-food scheme due to U.S. interference.

The diplomats said that instead of recommending a specific increase in the amount of oil that Iraq could sell, Mr. Annan would suggest the Security Council examine the possibility of raising Iraq's oil revenues in the light of a

steadily slide in the living standard of the average Iraqi.

But they said the U.N. chief would not propose any figure himself, despite pleas from U.N. aid agencies to do so.

U.N. envoys said Mr. Annan had considered recommending the Security Council raise from \$2 billion to \$5 billion the oil Iraq could sell to buy food, medicine and other goods for the next six months.

The current plan expires on Friday next week. Mr. Annan gives his recommendations in a report to the Council on Monday.

The year-old programme is aimed at bringing humanitarian goods to Iraq's people to alleviate punishing trade sanctions imposed shortly after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

About \$1 billion is left unspent in the current oil-for-food plan, with Iraq saying the U.S. has delayed approving contracts on a U.N. sanctions committee. U.S. envoys say that Iraq failed to prepare the proper paperwork.

Iraq itself always balked at the oil-for-food plan, saying it was used as an excuse for not moving to ease sanctions.

In Baghdad, Al Qadisiya newspaper said on Saturday that Iraq would "bravely confront any aggression [by the U.S.] as it had confronted its 30-nation aggression" in the 1991 Gulf war which ended the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

The paper accused the U.S. of playing down Iraqi initiatives which aim at defusing tension including inviting diplomats to visit presidential palaces from which arms inspectors are banned.



Iraq said a U.S. U-2 spy plane flew over its territory again Saturday, the official Iraqi News Agency INA reported. INA, quoting an official spokesman, said the plane entered Iraqi skies at 9.20 a.m. local time flying at high altitude beyond the reach of Iraqi air defences. Iraq has said it would shoot down the plane if it flew within the range of its air defences. It has also demanded that the United Nations replace the American spy plane with aircraft from other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. A U-2 Dragon Lady is shown flying high in an undated U.S. Air Force photo (Reuters photo)

29 massacred near Algiers — press

ALGIERS (AFP) — Twenty-five people had their throats slit and four were burned alive by suspected Islamists in two separate incidents near Algiers, Algerian press reports said Saturday.

The incidents took place Thursday at roadblocks set up by "terrorists" — the name used here for Islamists — at Souhane, 20 kilometres south of Algiers and at Oued Djer, west of the capital.

There was no official confirmation of the reported killings.

More than 175 people were believed to have been

murdered since local elections were held on Oct. 23. Independent media said that security forces had also killed dozens of Islamists in anti-extremist sweeps in recent weeks.

According to La Tribune, the head of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in the Medea region, Mahdjoub Bensaid, was shot dead by security forces Monday at Draa Al Galb.

In the massacre at Souhane, 18 men, three women and four children had their throats cut when they were stopped at a false roadblock on Route 8 between Larbaa and Tab-

lat. Two people received bullet wounds but managed to escape, the daily Le Soir d'Algerie said. All were from Tablat, some 80 kilometres south of Algiers.

On Aug. 20, 65 people were murdered at Souhane in another attack blamed on Islamists. The GIA is active in the area, which is considered extremely dangerous.

In the Oued Djer incident, four men stopped at a roadblock between Al Affroun and Khemis Miliana "were tied up and then locked in their truck before their assailants set fire to

it," Le Matin said. The four were not immediately identified.

On Friday, one person was killed when a bomb went off in the western Tipaza region. Security forces defused bombs in a cafe and at a bus stop in the Staoueli coastal area Thursday and Friday, Le Matin said.

The daily Liberte meanwhile reported that six unidentified bodies have been found along the Kaa Essour and Bordj Al Kiffan beaches in Algiers.

Iraq says Iran's release of prisoners not enough

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The foreign ministry said Saturday that Iran's release of almost 500 Iraqi prisoners from their 1980-1988 war was welcome but not enough.

"The release of 497 Iraqi prisoners is only a limited number of the 18,093 Iraqis held in Iran and officially registered" with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), a foreign ministry spokesman said.

He expressed "appreciation of the Iranian gesture, hopeful that Iran will respond to the call of Islam and set free all Iraqi PoWs."

Iraq said it unilaterally freed some 500 Iraqi prisoners on Thursday in a "humane" gesture to its former enemy and to mark the anniversary of the birth of

the Prophet Mohammad.

The release of the PoWs appeared to be a goodwill gesture toward Iraq ahead of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit next month in the Iranian capital.

An official Baghdad newspaper, Al Iraq, said Saturday that Iran should free all Iraqi prisoners in the run-up to the summit. Otherwise, the OIC should urge such a release in its Tehran resolutions, it said.

The issue of PoWs and soldiers missing in action during the eight-year war remains the principle obstacle to normalising relations between Tehran and Baghdad.

Baghdad says it has freed all of its Iranian PoWs except for one pilot, but Tehran says Iraq still holds at least 5,000 of its soldiers.

Israeli prime minister says 'never' to Palestinian state

BONN (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday ruled out the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, though insisting he wanted the Middle East peace process to move forward.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has said he wants to declare an independent state in 1999, but Mr. Netanyahu told a German newspaper that Israel would not allow that.

"An Israeli government will never take the risk of allowing a Palestinian state to attack

Israel," Mr. Netanyahu told Bild Am Sonntag.

"An independent Palestinian state could control the airspace above our cities and airports. We will never accept that," he added. The interview was released in advance of publication on Sunday.

Peacekeeping between Israelis and Palestinians has been stalled for months because of differences over security issues and the building of new Jewish settlements in Palestinian-ruled areas.

Mr. Netanyahu visits Bonn

next Thursday.

"Our relations with the USA are traditionally good. But, as in the best families, there are now differences of opinion," Mr. Netanyahu said in remarks published in German.

"I know that Chancellor Kohl is a great friend who can help his friends by influencing others."

Mr. Netanyahu on Thursday offered to give Palestinians more land on the West Bank within five months as long as they fought what he called ter-

rorism and joined accelerated talks on reaching a final peace deal.

But he offered no new concessions in the Bild Am Sonntag interview, saying the 1993 Oslo peace accord made no provision on stopping building new Jewish settlements in mainly Arab-populated areas.

"The previous government already planned these settlements. Now our critics are turning the Oslo peace accord on its head," he told Bild Am Sonntag.

"Israel is observing all its obligations. The Palestinians aren't holding to any. They are not arresting any terrorists and are failing to crack down on hostile propaganda in the media that they control."

Mr. Netanyahu said his government should not be written off, despite criticism from within his own right-wing Likud Party.

"It's too soon to start writing obituaries," he said. "In tough situations you have to stick to your course. We have a stable coalition."

Mr. Netanyahu was asked whether he had instructed his Mossad intelligence service not to assassinate any political foes in the future following an assassination attempt against a leader of the Islamist Hamas group in Amman.

He answered: "We have learned our lessons from past events, but we still live surrounded by terrorist organisations and terrorist leaders who want to destroy Israel."

"We will defend ourselves against them in future."

Egypt says Israel must make first move toward peace

CAIRO (AP) — Israel must make the first move to revive the Middle East peace process, and it should include a military withdrawal and a freeze of settlement building, the top advisor to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Friday.

"It is the turn of Israel to deliver on the main issues,"

Osama Baz told a news conference here.

Israel should make "further redeployments" of troops from the West Bank and impose a "moratorium on settlement activities and the unilateral actions that are contrary to the provision and the spirit of the peace agreements," he

said. In Egypt's opinion, he said, the Palestinians have fulfilled their obligations to tighten security measures to prevent "any terrorist activity."

Peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians broke down in March when Israel began building a Jewish settlement in occupied Arab east

Jerusalem, a part of the city that Palestinians view as the capital of their future state. Subsequently, Palestinian suicide bombers have killed dozens of people in Israel.

Regarded as the leading political analyst in the Mubarak administration, Mr. Baz shuttled between Israel

and the Palestinian self-rule areas earlier this year in a bid to bring the two sides back to the negotiating table.

He said Friday he was again talking with both sides. On Wednesday he met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's diplomatic adviser, Uzi Arad, in Cairo.

On Thursday and Friday, Mr. Baz discussed the latest Israeli proposals in phone calls with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

"We hope, together with the U.S., to be able, combining our forces, to revive the process," Mr. Baz told members of the Cairo Foreign Press Association.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 Little Rosey
14:30 Jonny Quest
14:50 The Magic School Bus
15:00 Energy Express
15:30 American Chart Show
16:30 Tarzan
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:00 Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
20:30 Hot Shots
21:10 Renegade
22:00 News in English
22:30 The Bourne Identity
23:15 The Jewel in the Crown

PRAYER TIMES

04:51 Fajr
06:12 (Sunrise) Duha
11:24 Dhuhur
14:12 'Asr
16:36 Maghreb
17:58 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifheh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771351.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 5516245.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 524328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to drop slightly, skies partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, and winds southeasterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be southerly moderate to active, and

seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 10/18
Aqaba 17/26
Deserts 08/17
Jordan Valley 18/26

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 19, Aqaba 28 Humidity readings: Amman 45 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 885446
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab 602507
Dr. Ayman Al Muhtaseb 875748
Dr. Jamal Jbarah 547351
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 625672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852
Al Quds pharmacy 811111

ZARQA:
Dr. Ya'qoub Al Khatib 991772
Khalifeh pharmacy 98541

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Fire Brigade 617101
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Dept. 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Co. 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity 64281/6
Alkileh Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/5
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)514111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:05 Lamaca (RJ)
08:25 Bombay (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:15 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:15 Beirut (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:00 Brussels, Milan (RJ)
17:05 Paris (RJ)
17:35 Madrid, Milan (RJ)
17:45 London (RJ)
18:05 Athens (RJ)
19:40 Rome (RJ)

19:40 Vienna (RJ)
23:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
00:05 Cairo (RJ)
02:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

03:25 Rome (AZ)
10:00 Sanaa (Y)
11:00 Riyadh (add) (SV)
12:25 Bahrain (GF)
13:00 Moscow (SU)
15:00 Doha (QR)
17:45 Jeddah (SV)
20:00 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

11:30 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:35 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:20 Athens (RJ)
20:10 Cairo (RJ)
20:30 New Delhi (RJ)
20:40 Damascus (RJ)
20:50 Jeddah (RJ)
21:00 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
22:00 Damascus (RJ)
22:30 Jakarta, Bangkok (RJ)
23:00 Jakarta (RJ)
23:50 Abu Dhabi, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
01:15 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

03:00 Athens (OA)
04:20 Rome (AZ)
06:15 Beirut (ME)
06:40 Beirut, London (BA)
07:50 London (BA)
11:00 Sanaa (Y)
13:15 Doha (GF)
14:50 Moscow (SU)
15:55 Doha (QR)
19:15 Jeddah (SV)
21:20 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)

Royal Wings (RW)

06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15 Aqaba (RW)
09:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
16:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55 Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 Aqaba (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:45 Beirut (RJ)
11:05 Vienna (RJ)
11:15 Rome (RJ)

PRINCESS MEETS WITH NGOS: HRH Princess Basma Saturday received representatives of women's non-governmental organisations and stressed the need to put forward a suitable mechanism for the next parliamentary elections. Princess Basma commended women's participation in the Nov. 4 general elections. The Princess called for continuing cooperation between non-governmental organisations and the Jordanian National Committee for Women Affairs (JNCWA) to help women participate in the political arena and reach decision-making positions (Petra photo)



Meeting opens Monday to examine population policies

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is organising a four-day meeting here beginning Monday for the heads of population committees in Arab states to discuss national policies on population and sustainable development. The meeting, which is to be presided over by Minister of Labour Saleh Khasawneh, is part of ESCWA's efforts to help Arab states carry out population-related projects that are funded by the U.N. Fund for Population Activities. Participants in the meeting will revise Arab countries' population policies, analyse

New \$73 million dam completed

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan has completed work on its sixth high-capacity dam, which will be able to store 55 million cubic metres of water, according to a report in Al Rai paper Saturday. The Karameh dam, west of Amman, will irrigate some 40,000 square kilometres of land in the Jordan valley. Situated on the King Abdullah canal, which runs parallel to the Jordan River in one of the lowest points on earth, about 400 metres below sea level, the dam will be up and running in time to catch the winter rains, Jordan Valley Authority officials said. The project cost \$73 million and was jointly financed by the treasury and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. Scientific reports indicate that the Kingdom's water shortage is reaching critical levels, estimating that by 2005 the country's reserves will be able to supply only 70 percent of demands.

Former air transport union president rejects motivations behind dismissal

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Abdul Halim Khaddam, a former four-time president of the General Union for Air Transport and Tourism, has said "ulterior motives" were behind his October dismissal from the union's executive board. Mr. Khaddam, who received the highest number of votes in this year's board elections, was dismissed on Oct. 26 for contesting the legal right of Royal Jordanian (RJ) employees to participate in the union board elections. According to Mr. Khaddam, the board used his challenge as a "facade" to hide the main reason behind his dismissal, which he said was due to his discovery of several management decisions last May regarding financial cutbacks such as laying off 70 RJ employees. "They used the challenge as a pretext to dismiss me, but behind that they were aiming at making me pay

for uncovering the lay-offs, which they justified as efforts to economise," he said. He added that RJ management could have cut expenses in several other areas without jeopardising the rights of its workers, who he said had been fired under false pretences of low productivity. He warned the Council of Ministers of the consequences of such an action and the council expressed gratitude for his efforts on the issue, according to Mr. Khaddam. "However," he said, "this matter alienated RJ management and they changed their attitude towards me." The new president of the union, Khalil Hiasat, stated that there have been no lay-offs in the past, but "if anyone was fired unjustly, he or she should come to me, and I, as the president of the union, will make sure their rights are restored." Mr. Khaddam, however, told the Jordan Times that 16 cases have been filed against RJ management at the Higher Court of Justice by those who were fired. Mr. Hiasat said Mr. Khaddam's dismissal followed recommendations by a judging committee, which decided he should be dismissed for contesting the right of RJ employees to vote in board elections. He added that ten out of 13 members of the board voted for his dismissal because they regarded his challenge as overriding all customary procedures. According to Mr. Hiasat, Mr. Khaddam contested the elections because he lost the union's presidency and several of his coalition members who ran for election to the board did not gain seats. Mr. Khaddam explained that he himself did not contest the legality of either the board or RJ employees. Rather he received the challenge from several union members "who were non-RJ employees and have every right to contest the elections." "I fulfilled my duty and passed on the challenge to

Cabinet hears report on signing of Jordan-EU agreement

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday heard a briefing by Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani and Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf on the signing of the Jordanian-European association agreement in Brussels last week. The signing was attended by HRH Crown Prince Hassan, who described it as "a vital step towards achieving prosperity and development in the region." Dr. Khalaf signed for Jordan, and Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos, President of the European Commission Jacques Santer, and the foreign ministers of the 15 European Union member states signed for the EU. At the regular session, chaired by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, the Cabinet endorsed a delegation led by the secretary general of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources to attend the executive meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Tunis on Dec. 8. The Cabinet gave permission to Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi to visit Saudi Arabia and Oman next month to discuss coordination in health-related affairs.

PPD refers newspaper office head to court on charges of slander

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Press and Publications Department (PPD) has reportedly referred Bassam Badarin, head of the Al Quds Al Arabi (Arab Jerusalem) newspaper office in Amman, to the public prosecutor's office on charges that he slandered Jordan's reputation. The prosecutor general subsequently referred Mr. Badarin to court for trial under the provisions of Article 132 of the Jordanian Penal Code, which imposes a JD50 fine and a one-year imprisonment term on violators, according to the weekly newspaper Shihani. The PPD referred Mr. Badarin to the prosecutor general because, the paper said, he had sent press material to the London-based Al Quds Al Arabi paper considered by the PPD as distorting Jordan's image. Meanwhile, Al Arab Al Yawm daily Saturday reported that the PPD last week confiscated the latest edition of "Students' Forum," a newsletter published by the University of Jordan (UJ) Student Council. The newsletter tackles student affairs and is circulated on the university campus, according to Hareth Issa, the newsletter editor. The newsletter, which is distributed exclusively to UJ students, does not require PPD approval for publication, he said. However, he said, the students' council nevertheless had sent a request to the PPD director to obtain a licence to publish. According to PPD regulations, a reply should have been issued within 30 days. But Mr. Issa said the students' council did not receive a reply from the PPD, although the request was submitted last June. For his part, PPD Director Bilal Tal told Al Arab Al Yawm that a newsletter circulating within the university should tackle only issues concerning university affairs. It was found that the newsletter had been publishing affairs not relevant to students or the university, he said, adding that to publish, the university administration and not the students' council should apply for a licence from the PPD. Furthermore, Mr. Tal said the "Students' Forum" has been published off-campus. According to Salman Bdour, UJ student affairs dean, the university is not responsible for the contents of "Students' Forum." He confirmed that the newsletter has been published outside the university and has tackled many issues of a non-university nature.

Tourism delegation to visit Egypt Sunday in show of support

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Jordanian delegation led by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji leaves for the Egyptian city of Luxor today in a show of solidarity with the Egyptian tourist services following the Nov. 17, attack on tourists. The visit by the delegation, which comprises heads and proprietors of tourism offices as well as tour operators, has been organised by the Jordan Travel Agents Association (JTAA), according to JTAA President Mohammad Imam. The delegation will also discuss ways for further bolstering cooperation in tourism-related fields. Egypt's main armed Islamist group, the Gama'a Islamiya, claimed responsibility for the attack, which left 69 tourists and three Egyptian policemen dead and 17 tourists and eight Egyptians wounded. The attack was carried out at the entrance to Hatshepsut's temple in the Valley of the Queens on the west bank of the Nile River. The attack was the first in Luxor since the Islamists launched an anti-government campaign in 1992, which has left more than 1,300 people dead, including dozens of tourists. The Jordanian delegation's visit is intended to back Egypt's endeavours to market the country's archaeological and historic sites, which constitute part of the regional tourism body, according to Mr. Imam. The delegation members will meet Egyptian tourism officials and will visit hotels and other tourist facilities, he added.

Jordan not planning to sign anti-landmine treaty

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan will not be signing the Ottawa Treaty to ban anti-personnel (AP) mines later this week, according to Ma'ruf Bakhit, the vice president of Military Affairs at Mu'ta University and a major general in the Jordan Armed Forces. The treaty, to be signed during a convention scheduled to be held Dec. 2-4, obliges states to destroy existing AP mines, whether in stockpiles or in the ground, within ten years. Some analysts believe this time period to be insufficient, but states such as Canada, which destroyed the remaining third of their AP mines last month, are offering financial and technical assistance in sweeping AP mines. According to international observers Jordan will participate in the workshops taking place on the sidelines of this treaty, but will not actually endorse it. "This does not mean that Jordan cannot sign the treaty at a later stage, when it is ready," Canadian Ambassador to Jordan Michael Malloy told the Jordan Times. Jordan participated in the Brussels International Conference for a global ban on anti-personnel mines in June, which was followed by the Oslo Diplomatic Conference in September, where Jordan and other states negotiated the finalised treaty text to be signed in Ottawa. "One person falls victim to anti-personnel mines every twenty minutes. They do not discriminate between children and army personnel," stated Jacques de Maio, the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In the Middle East, Israel, Egypt, and Iraq have shown no intention of banning anti-personnel mines. "Signing the treaty is a unilateral act and is based on a political decision," noted Mr. de Maio, adding that Israel has made it clear that it will not sign a treaty at this stage. Dr. Bakhit told the Jordan Times that "in principle, Jordan supports all humanitarian efforts aimed at achieving a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. Jordan is open to international cooperation, but we have to wait and see," he said, adding that provided all states sign this treaty and it becomes universal, then Jordan encourages its adoption. As far as signing the treaty, Dr. Bakhit stated that Jordan assessed all initiatives in this domain and studied the situation from all aspects with priority given to humanitarian concerns. "The treaty has to be balanced with national security interests, paying particular attention to [the positions of] neighbouring countries," he explained. When discussing the Middle East vis-a-vis the prospect of an ultimate ban on landmines, one should consider strong regional dimensions to this issue, observed Mr. de Maio. He explained that there is no widespread support for the ban of AP mines in the region, and "a state always looks at its neighbours" when taking a decision like this. "I think that Jordanians have a strong understanding of the issues involved," remarked Mr. Malloy, adding that he believed that unless all neighbouring states agreed together to ban AP mines, it would be difficult to take such a decision on an individual basis. "As far as we know, none of the Middle Eastern states will be signing the Ottawa Treaty, but many of them will be coming," Mr. Malloy said. Jordan has one of the most economical records in clearing mines, with the ability to demine one AP mine at \$300. In other parts of the world, Mr. Malloy said, the actual cost of clearing AP mines can be as much as \$1,200 per mine. Landmine specialists have estimated that there are still around 280,000 landmines buried in Jordan as a consequence of previous wars. "Jordan receives technical and financial assistance from countries such as Germany and the U.S. to remove landmines. Jordan even relies on its own meager resources in efforts to sweep landmines," said Dr. Bakhit. Even though these efforts are expensive, Jordan is concerned for the well-being of its farmers and citizens situated at border areas, Dr. Bakhit added. Because of the rough terrain at the Syrian-Jordanian border and along the Jordan River, sweeping AP mines has to be done the old-fashioned way, which is very dangerous and time consuming, Mr. Malloy explained, adding that soldiers and detectors have to be used to remove these mines by hand. According to retired Brigadier General Fawaz Khriesha, during the last ten months 84 United Nations experts were killed in Kuwait while attempting to demine AP mines along the Iraq-Kuwait border. The Kuwaiti government paid \$800 million and hired 4,000 deminers to clear the estimated seven million landmines left over from the Gulf War of 1991, Mr. de Maio said. Gen. Khriesha, a former commander of the engineer field battalion in the Jordan Armed Forces, explained that mined areas of land in Jordan are usually fenced in with the proper signs indicating landmines. However, mines are carried by floodwaters after storms, and can come to rest on or near farmland, Gen. Khriesha noted. The treaty requires governments to take national legal and administrative measures which may include administrative instructions to armed forces and changes in military planning. The Jordanian government has already started to clear some AP mines along the Jordan-Israel border in the Jordan Valley, according to Mr. de Maio. "This has been a joint effort between the Jordanian and Israeli armies and has succeeded in removing a large number of mines in the area," he concluded.

What's Going On

- TWELFTH ITALIAN FILM WEEK**
- * "Traffici da un raggio di sole" (Pierced by a Ray of Light), with subtitles in English, at Samir Al Rifai's auditorium, University of Jordan at 5:00 p.m.
- CHRISTMAS CHOIR**
- * Annual YWCA Christmas classical choir on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday (3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Dec. '97) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- LECTURE**
- * Lecture by orientalist Denis Johnson Davis (in Arabic) about his experience in translating Arabic literature into English which began in 1947 at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.
- EXHIBITIONS**
- * Paintings on fine porcelain at the Arts and Crafts Centre (Artisana) (Tel. 671118) until Dec. 2.
 - * Paintings by Ammar Khammash at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 12.
 - * Paintings by Saadi Al-Kaabi at Orient Gallery (Tel. 681303/4), until Dec. 4.
 - * An exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Koraishi, and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Massoudi, inspired by the poems of Mahmoud Darwish, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz, and works by contemporary Arab artists.
 - * "Portrait '97" — works by over thirty Arab artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina, until Nov. 30.
 - * Works by Khalid Khreis at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 10.
 - * Exhibition of wallhangings and weavings by Bashar Kathem and others at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (Tel. 699131/2) until Dec. 4.
 - * "Journey Within" by Pakistani artist Gulgee and his son, sculptor Amin Gulgee, at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Tel. 630128), until Dec. 15.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess Alia attends concert marking King's birthday

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Saturday attended a musical concert at the New English School marking the 62nd birthday of His Majesty King Hussein. Also attending the concert were a number of invitees.

6,300 people to benefit from social security next year

AMMAN (Petra) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) said 6,300 people will be receiving benefits from the Social Security Fund by the beginning of 1998. SSC Director General Safwan Tougan said those who reach the age of 60 for men and 55 for women will receive their annual pensions from the SSC starting next year.

JORDAN TIMES
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CONDOLENCES

TO: IBTISAM ABDULLAH
YOUR COLLEAGUES IN
ENTRECANALES SHARE
WITH YOU THE SADNESS
OF THESE MOMENTS

Dublin urges cross-border links, angers Unionists

BELFAST (R) — Ireland sparked fury among supporters of British rule in Northern Ireland Saturday by calling for powerful political links across the partitioned island.

Foreign Minister David Andrews said cross border institutions should be created, composed of legislators in both parts of the island, with powers "not unlike a government."

The proposal, which is one of Ireland's demands in current all-party talks being held in Belfast, was condemned by majority "Unionist" politicians who have for long been fearful of a dilution of British sovereignty.

They say that only Britain has the right to make decisions on how the province should be run.

"It is I think capable of provoking a major crisis," said senior Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) negotiator Reg Empey.

"I don't know what (could be) more of a challenge, more of a slap in the face from the Unionist point of view," Mr. Empey told

Reuters.

Nigel Dodds, a senior politician in the Democratic Unionist Party which jealously guards British rule over the province said Mr. Andrews' remarks "showed that Dublin had 'learned nothing' over a quarter century of conflict."

Mr. Andrews used the clearest language to date by an Irish minister in spelling out a key element of Dublin's strategy for defusing strife between Northern Ireland's

Protestant Unionists and the minority Catholics, who want an end to British rule and an all-Ireland state.

Dublin sees "cross border", or "north-south" bodies, as key to easing sectarian tensions.

"A cross border body with executive powers would mean representatives from the (British) devolved government in the north participating with ministers from ... parliament in the south and they would reach joint decisions which would be implemented by a secretariat who would have ... strong executive functions, and

directional functions, and not unlike a government," Mr. Andrews told BBC radio.

He is spearheading Ireland's negotiating team in negotiations on the future of the province which began in earnest in September after outlawed Irish Republican Army guerrillas halted anti-British violence.

Unionists want an internal northern Ireland assembly under London rule.

They regard neighbouring Ireland as a foreign state and for years have railed against what they see as Dublin "interference" as the Irish and British governments have forged closer cooperation.

They say Ireland must rescind a constitutional claim over northern Ireland before normal relations can blossom.

Nationalists comprise 40 per cent of the northern Ireland population. They are entitled to carry Irish passports and say that their Irish identity has always been stifled in what they see as an artificially contrived

"statelet" in the north.

Moderate nationalists want "cross border bodies" that would streamline political co-operation, develop close trading links, and blur the border.

Sinn Fein, the IRA's political arm, say they are in the talks to achieve a "united Ireland" free of British influence.

The UUP, which speaks for most in the 60 per cent Protestant pro-British population, sits at the same table as Sinn Fein but steadfastly refuses to negotiate with the Republicans.

The UUP hopes that it can forge a new deal with the moderate Nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party, the main Catholic group, and achieve arrangements that command cross-community assent within northern Ireland.

Mr. Empey said Mr. Andrews was suggesting that he wanted a body that would make decisions on an all-Ireland basis.

"He knows what everybody else knows, that a settlement is not to be found in that area."



India's caretaker Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral (centre) holds the hands of his United Front coalition partners during a press conference in New Delhi (Reuters photo)

India's government falls, power struggle looms

NEW DELHI (R) — India's 17-month-old coalition government fell Friday after its key Congress Party ally withdrew support, ending 10 days of political deadlock but setting off a new jostle for power.

President K.R. Narayanan accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and ministers of his United Front alliance of free marketeers, regional and Communist parties, but asked them to stay on as a caretaker administration.

He must now decide whether to order the dissolution of parliament — sending India's 600 million voters to their second election in 18 months — or invite heavyweight parties in the fragmented parliament to try to form a new government.

Congress immediately staked a claim to forming a government even though it is far short of a parliamentary majority.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said it would announce Saturday whether it was going to make a bid for power.

Although the biggest grouping in parliament, the BJP is also short of a majority. Pundits believe the party would be hard pressed to win over parties from the United Front, which was put together in the first place to block it.

Congress pulled out after Mr. Gujral's coalition repeatedly refused to drop from its ranks a regional party which was named by a probe into the 1991 murder of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) party, which rules the southern state of Tamil Nadu, was accused of providing "tacit support" for Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger sep-

arartists, who Indian officials believe were behind the assassination.

The prospect of government change or a power vacuum until polls early next year has alarmed the country's industry leaders, dented investor confidence in the continuation of free market reforms, and weighed on financial markets.

"Business uncertainty

is at its lowest ebb because of the political uncertainty,"

V. Raghuraman, secretary general of the associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry, told Reuters.

But Industry Minister Murasoli Maran was quick to reassure, describing the political upset as trivial and the economy as fundamen-

tally very strong.

India's Central Bank Friday unveiled a package of measures to prop up the rupee, which has dropped eight per cent since August to an all-time low of 38.85 per U.S. dollar.

The bank took steps to curb speculation against the currency and reduce liquidity in the money market to force up demand, but dealers were sceptical that they would work.

A mild-mannered scholar who turns 78 next week, Mr. Gujral offered his resignation with the grace and politeness for which he has come to be known, referring to those who had brought him down as "the honourable members of the Congress Party."

He did not press for snap elections, though a key minister in his cabinet said they were a "distinct possibility" and a chance for the United Front to beat the two big parties.

"The United Front is today being perceived as a cohesive formation at the national level," Information Minister Jaipal Reddy told reporters.

"In the event of a snap poll we are far better prepared than either the Congress or the BJP."

"The United Front has demonstrated greater unity than Congress has during the last one week," he said, referring to fictional divides in the 112-year-old party.

Critics say Congress, which became synonymous with India's freedom movement and ruled for all but five of its 50 years of independence, seized on the issue of Gandhi's murder to make a return on the back of its populist past.

Moves are afoot to put Gandhi's widow, the link to the charismatic Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, at the helm of the party.

Media lashes Congress over government's fall

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Indian newspapers here Saturday lashed the Congress I party for masterminding the fall of the country's coalition government.

The Indian Express said the Congress, which Friday provoked the resignation of Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's minority government by withdrawing its legislative backing, had been following a "preposterous game plan."

"A party that roundly lost the mandate just last year now wants to hijack power through sheer blackmail," it said.

The Congress, voted out of power in 1996, ended seven months of support for Mr. Gujral after a coalition party was implicated last week in the 1991 murder of former Congress Premier Rajiv Gandhi.

The Hindustan Times, in an editorial headlined "One more scalp," recalled how the Congress had also toppled a minority coalition in April in an earlier abortive bid for power.

It said President R.K. Narayanan, who Friday asked Mr. Gujral to continue as caretaker prime minister, had "a wide area of discretion ranging from ordering dissolution to exploring alternative combinations that can provide a stable majority government."

"It is to be hoped that there will not be a third chance for the Congress to collect prime ministerial scalps."

The Times of India, however, was relieved that the crisis had reached a conclusion after nine days of deadlock as the Congress dithered over whether to carry out its threat of withdrawing its backing.

Headlined "At long last," its article said there had been "endless exchanges of letters and innumerable meetings convened, adjourned and reconvened."

It said the Congress' announcement that it would now try to form its own coalition was to be expected. "It has to make the attempt, at least in the interest of keeping its flock together," the daily said, but argued "the numbers simply don't add up."

The coalition's DMK party, implicated in an official report last week, has denied it had links with Sri Lankan separatist guerrillas blamed for killing Gandhi.

Truth commission criticises Madikizela-Mandela's former colleagues

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — The power that Winnie Madikizela-Mandela used to wield was evident in the muted testimony of witnesses before a panel investigating apartheid-era atrocities.

A string of ruling-party leaders, clerics and the former personal physician of President Nelson Mandela avoided any direct accusations against his ex-wife in speaking of the murders, beatings, rapes and other abuses allegedly perpetrated by her former bodyguards in the Soweto black township.

Only one witness challenged Madikizela-Mandela Thursday, the fourth day of her hearing before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, accusing her of at least encouraging torture and murder — and perhaps participating.

Safety and security official Azhar Cachalia concluded his statement by saying the commission should recommend that anyone convicted of such abuses be barred from holding public office. The hearing room burst into applause when he finished.

Meanwhile, the British Broadcasting Co. reported Thursday that a convicted murderer will testify that Madikizela-Mandela masterminded the killing of a doctor.

Madikizela-Mandela, 63, is running for deputy president of the governing African National Congress next month and, if successful, could become deputy president of the country after the next national elections in 1999.

The truth commission is investigating apartheid-era human rights abuses for a report it will compile next year aimed at promoting reconciliation. It lacks the power to press criminal charges, but can turn over evidence to police for investigation.

Commission Chairman Desmond Tutu and other panel members expressed impatience with most of the testimony Thursday.

"Sometimes answers are not as straight as we had hoped they would be," said Mr. Tutu, the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner for his anti-apartheid activism.

Relatives of victims and others have testified this week about a reign of terror conducted by Madikizela-Mandela's bodyguards, called the Mandela United Football Club, a decade ago in the name of political solidarity.

Resentment grew so strong that Soweto residents set fire to Madikizela-Mandela's house in 1988. Leaders of the anti-apartheid movement responded by forming a "crisis committee" that tried to disband the football club and prevent damage to the reputation of Nelson Mandela, who was then a prisoner of the white-led apartheid government.

But leaders of the crisis committee, all former activists who worked with Madikizela-Mandela before, offered few new details Thursday on their failure to prevent the abductions and beatings of four young men. One of the four, 14-year-old Stompie Seipei, accused of being a police informant, was later found murdered.

In 1991, Madikizela-Mandela was sentenced to six years in prison for kidnapping and assault in the case involving Seipei and the other three young men. Her sentence was reduced on appeal to a \$3,200 fine.

Commission members accused the crisis committee members of having tried to cover up the problems.

"I would like to have a clear idea of how your interests, ambitions and aspirations affected (you) in not taking rigorous steps," said Hlengiwe Mkhize, a commission member.

One crisis committee member, the Rev. Frank Chikane, a top official in Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office, insisted the committee had few options. Some members of the football club were operatives for the banned African

National Congress, and police then were agents of apartheid rulers, he noted.

In his interview with the BBC broadcast Thursday, jailed murderer Cyril Mbatha said Madikizela-Mandela handed him and others a gun to carry out the January 1989 murder of Dr. Abu Asvat.

"The gun that killed Dr. Asvat, we got it from Mrs. Mandela's hands," Mbatha said in the interview from a South African prison.

Mbatha said she wanted Asvat killed because the doctor refused to provide false medical records that would help her avoid suspicion in the death of Stompie Seipei, a 14-year-old boy who had been accused of informing to the police, the BBC reported.

Asked why he should be believed, Mbatha replied, "What I am trying to do is to be fair to the people who are suffering from the results of what I have done."

The report, which referred to Mbatha by the first name Zakele, said Madikizela-Mandela had offered the gunmen the equivalent of \$6,000 for the killing.

In September, the other man convicted in the Abu Asvat murder, Thulani Dlamini, named Madikizela-Mandela as the person behind the slaying.

Madikizela-Mandela ordered Dlamini and Mbatha to carry out the killing, South Africa's Mail and Guardian newspaper quoted Dlamini as saying.

An affidavit by Kaifza Cebekhulu, a former bodyguard for the prominent political activist, made the identical allegation, the newspaper said.

Madikizela-Mandela has always denied any involvement in the killing.

Dlamini and Mbatha were arrested after Asvat's killing and sentenced to death. Their sentences were later commuted to life imprisonment when South Africa banned capital punishment.

China to demine border with Vietnam

BEIJING (AFP) — China has begun a demining operation along the border with Vietnam in an area where the two countries fought in 1979, the official Xinhua news agency said Saturday.

The operation, the second since the two countries normalised relations at the beginning of the decade, will clear 120 minefields measuring 20,000 square meters within three years, Xinhua said.

The Chinese autonomous region of Guangxi, which borders Vietnam, has formed five demining teams. Five villages along the border are within the area to be cleared.

In the first demining operation, carried out in 1992, more than 600,000 mines were recovered, freeing 18,000 hectares for cultivation, the agency said.

China, which considers mines necessary for its defence, has said it will not join a treaty banning anti-personnel mines which is to be signed in Ottawa next week by more than 100 countries.

Russia and the United States also said they will not sign the treaty.

Swiss graves pack in the rich and famous

GENEVA (AFP) — From Russian anarchist Bakunin to British rocker Vince Taylor and actor Richard Burton, graves of the rich and famous are a common sight in Swiss cemeteries.

Loved by celebrities for its calm, pretty scenery and tax haven security, Switzerland has around 1,260 hectares of burial grounds, some of which are major tourist attractions.

In Zurich, the headstone of Johanna Spyri, author of the "Heidi" series which has charmed generations of children, is a Mecca for busloads of Americans, British and Germans.

The Japanese prefer to immortalise the grave of Red Cross founder Henry

Dunant.

Nobel Literature Prize winner Elias Canetti, buried in 1994, is a neighbour of Irish author James Joyce, whose tomb has been decorated daily with a fresh rose since his death in 1941.

A trio of German-language writers include Thomas Mann, who penned "Death in Venice" and is laid to rest near Zurich.

The grave of Herman Hesse, famous for his "Siddhartha" and "Steppenwolf" works, lies at Gentilino in Ticino, Switzerland's southern-most canton. But the numerous Germans who come to cast their eyes on their compatriot's tomb-

stone generally leave disappointed by its starkness.

Germans are also interested in the mound sheltering Austrian writer Rainer Maria Rilke.

The urn of screen star Paulette Goddard in Ronco is not nearly as attention grabbing as the grave of her husband, the British-born comedian Charlie Chaplin, located in Corsier-sur-Vecvey.

Bakunin's burial site in Bern is surrounded by the tombs of Swiss ministers. German painter Paul Klee is buried a few metres away.

Racing car fans flock to the Fribourg cemetery where driver Jo Siffert was injured after his tragic accident in 1971 at Brands

Hatch, England.

In Geneva, a grave marked "J.C." stands not for Jesus Christ but Jacques Calvin, who died in the city in 1564. Initials were often preferred by men of the church who preached humility among the living.

The words "And may they not fear" in old Icelandic are inscribed on the gravestone of Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges.

Photos are willingly snapped in front of the Lausanne graves of Richard Burton, Coco Chanel, Pierre de Coubertin, father of the modern Olympic Games and Romania's Queen Helene.

Near Lausanne is the resting place of French dramatist Jean Anouilh, whose last wishes before he died in 1987 were to be buried near the spot where grave diggers downed their tools.

The canton of Vaud, just north of Geneva, also shelters the caskets of movie stars Audrey Hepburn and David Niven, 1960s rock-and-roller Vince Taylor, and "Lolita" creator Vladimir Nabokov.

Two new names have recently expanded the ranks of luminaries buried locally: American author Patricia Highsmith and the originator of the Gump Maltese cartoons, Hilda Hugo Pratt, who died in 1995.

Coin shortage in India yields novel solutions

NEW DELHI (AP) — No small change to give to your customers? Just print your own currency businesses. In the western Indian city of Ahmedabad they are printing "paper coins" and "change coupons" following a

shortage of the metal coins minted by the government, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency reported Saturday.

The Federal Reserve Bank of India, which regulates money supply, said the coin shortage is tempo-

rary and new coins are being minted, PTI reported. The bank first allowed a government bus company to issue "change coupons."

Businesses then copied the idea. Ahmedabad is 900 kilometres west of New Delhi.



Updated picture of tinboxes containing filmrolls of microfilmed documents as part of the Austrian newspaper Der Standard's series on the 'Geheimakte Nazigold' (Secret File Nazigold). The Vienna newspaper confirmed the discovery of 22 microfilms said to contain revelations on gold confiscated by Nazis in concentration camps and ghettos before being deposited with the Reichsbank (APA/MATTHIAS CREMER/DER)

'Sensational' new documents on Nazi gold found in Austria — TV

BADEN-BADEN, Germany (AFP) — More than 800 documents containing "sensational" new details on the source of stolen Nazi gold have been uncovered in Vienna, German television station Suedwestfunk said Friday.

The station said it had obtained copies of the documents, which it said originated in the Third Reich foreign ministry and the former Reichsbank and are contained on 22 micro-

films dated 1957.

In one of the documents, then Reichsbank Director Albert Thomas traces the sources and destination of gold placed in the bank's vaults, the station said.

Suedwestfunk said it would air a special on the reports Monday.

In Vienna, the newspaper Standard confirmed the discovery of the 22 microfilms.

Experts quoted by Suedwestfunk said the documents could contain revelations on gold confiscated by the Nazis in concentration camps and ghettos before being deposited with the Reichsbank.

German political scientist Hersch Fischler found the documents after years of research, in the possession of the widow of Herbert Herzog, an Austrian salesman who died in 1977, the station reported.

Herzog, who spent 10 months as a prisoner in the

Lawmaker says Sri Lanka jails hundreds of Tamils for years without trial

COLOMBO (AP) — A lawmaker accused the Sri Lankan government Saturday of jailing hundreds of ethnic Tamils without trial for as long as five years.

Two hundred Tamil prisoners continued a hunger strike demanding they be released.

There are over 1,000 Tamil detainees who are languishing in prisons, detention camps and police stations for the past many years without their cases being investigated, or action being taken to release them if there are no charges, said Joseph Pararajasingham, of the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front, said in a letter to Justice Minister Lakshman Peris.

Soldiers and police detain hundreds of young Tamils every week, in the war-torn northeast and in the capital, while hunting for Tamil Tiger guerrillas who have been fighting for 14 years to carve out a homeland for the Indian

Ocean island's minority.

Most of them are freed when relatives visit police stations and vouch for the prisoners' identities. Those suspected as rebels are sent to overcrowded prisons until detectives probe their cases.

There was no immediate response from the government to the lawmakers' letter.

Saturday afternoon, the fasting prisoners were moved to a prison in Kalutara, 45 kilometres south of Colombo. Journalists were not allowed to speak to the prisoners and those photographers who took pictures had their film rolls confiscated.

Thursday, Amnesty International accused the Sri Lankan military of killing nearly all 600 people reported missing after their arrest in northern Sri Lanka during the past 18 months.

But the Foreign Ministry dismissed the amnesty report as imbalanced.

"Nearly all have died as a result of torture or been deliberately killed in detention," the human rights group said. A team of amnesty investigators visited northern Sri Lanka recently, the main battleground in the 14-year war pitting government troops against ethnic Tamil separatists.

The hunger strike by Tamil prisoners continued into the third day Saturday. The prisoners have staged such protests before, but law officials have persuaded them to stop by promising speedy action to release them.

Amnesty also accused Tigers, recently branded a terrorist group by the U.S. government, of indiscriminately killing civilians when they attack military checkpoints or patrols, and of summarily executing suspected informants. The government has pledged to improve its human rights record.

In September, officials allowed a United Nations team into Jaffna, which has been under army control since troops wrested it from rebels two years ago, to assess the army's treatment of civilians. The U.N. report has not been made public yet.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in Sri Lanka's civil war.

Wood shown as key evidence in Oklahoma bomb trial

DENVER (R) — Prosecutors in the Oklahoma City bombing trial Friday showed jurors a small piece of wood panelling that they said was key evidence linking defendant Terry Nichols to the 1995 blast that killed 168 people.

But defence lawyers said the evidence was unreliable because it had been dealt with improperly.

It was presented as prosecutors neared the end of the government's case. When they have finished presenting it, Mr. Nichols' attorneys are expected to present evidence for about two weeks.

State prosecutors showed jurors the piece of panelling and said it was imbedded with crystals of the same type as those of the fertiliser allegedly used in the bomb and found at Mr. Nichols' home.

The wood was found by a search team in a parking lot

across the street from the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City two days after the April 19, 1995 bombing.

Prosecutors contend the panelling came from the side of a rented truck used to transport the bomb, made of fertiliser and fuel oil, that blew up the government office building.

"It appears to have come from the box panel from the Ryder truck," FBI agent Alton Wilson testified.

Prosecutors say Mr. Nichols, 42, and his former army buddy Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted in June and sentenced to death for the bombing, were partners in building the bomb.

Mr. McVeigh is appealing against his conviction. Mr. Nichols is charged on the same 11 counts and could face the death penalty if convicted.

Mr. Nichols' defence lawyers said the evidence about the piece of wood panelling was not reliable because the FBI agents who recovered and tested it did not follow proper procedures.

Under cross-examination, FBI chemist Ronald Kelly twice admitted that he had not followed proper steps in recovering and handling the piece of wood.

FBI Laboratory Supervisor Steven Burmeister testified that during a search of Mr. Nichols' home in Herington, Kansas, he found explosives, including ammonium nitrate, the fertiliser pellets used to make the bomb.

"They were on the steps, leading up to the porch area," Mr. Burmeister testified, describing the substance as "spherical-like."

Mr. Burmeister said the search of Mr. Nichols' home also uncovered primadet blasting caps that detonate explosives.

EU softens gas cut target to below 10% — paper

KYOTO (R) — The European Union (EU), which is calling for the most dramatic cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, is ready to soften its position on the issue by moving from its proposed 15 per cent gas cut target to below 10 per cent, a Japanese newspaper reported Saturday.

The EU has unofficially told Japan, host of this week's crucial global warming conference, that it is ready to accept an agreement to cut gas emissions by a figure that is below 10 per cent beyond 1990 levels by 2010, a Japanese government source told the Yomiuri Shimbun.

EU officials were not immediately available for

comment on the report, which seemed to signal the start of horse trading ahead of the Dec. 1-10 meeting in the western Japanese city of Kyoto.

With just two days until the meeting starts, the scene is set for the last great environmental battle of the 20th century with nations of the world far apart on how to stop the earth heating up.

One of the major stumbling blocks to an agreement is the amount by which developed nations will be legally required to cut greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide.

At the talks in Kyoto, more than 160 countries

will try to settle on a plan to reduce gases from burning fossil fuels. Such gases pose potentially disastrous effects to weather, ocean levels, agriculture, ecosystems and the spread of disease.

The government source told the Yomiuri that the EU agreed to a "figure less than 10 per cent" during recent exchanges between Japanese and EU officials.

The EU, however, did not give an exact figure for the emissions-cut target, the paper said.

The United States, the world's largest producer of greenhouse gases, appointed a new chief negotiator just a week ago and has warned it is ready to walk

away from a deal that is not economically and environmentally prudent.

The United States wants to stabilise emissions between 2008 and 2012 at 1990 levels and insists that developing nations like China and India sign on to cuts and Japan wants a five per cent cut from 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012.

In a symbol of how tough the talks are likely to be, Japan has chosen an ex-foreign ministry official once involved in a hostage negotiation to chair the meeting, which is officially called the third conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Canada stumbles ahead of Kyoto greenhouse talks

OTTAWA (R) — The Canadian government, fumbling up to the last minute in formulating its position on greenhouse gases, will send a delegation to Monday's talks in Japan without a formally announced negotiating stance.

The proposals of most industrialised countries for reducing greenhouse gases to prevent global warming has long been known, and the Canadian government had scheduled a news conference for Friday morning to announce its position.

But that news conference was suddenly cancelled after a cabinet meeting considered the issue late Thursday, despite the fact that Canadian delegates would have to be heading to the Dec. 1-10 talks in Kyoto over the weekend.

Monday, we'll let you know what the targets and

timelines are," Environment Minister Christine Stewart promised parliament Friday.

Canadian officials assured journalists that there was no disagreement on the overall consensus position of a target date for making the cuts.

There were a few details to be worked out," said Matthew Bassett, spokesman for International Cooperation Minister Diane Marleau.

The whole greenhouse debate in Canada has been bitter, pitting environmentalists against business and especially the energy sector based in Alberta, and the latest imbroglio only added to the turmoil.

"Will the environment minister write her plan in the plane on the back of an air-sickness bag? why won't she come out from under her rock and tell us her plan now?" demanded the opposition Reform

Party's rob Anders in parliament.

"How can the world (negotiating) partners take her seriously now?" asked the Bloc Quebecois' Susan Tremblay.

One government source said Monday's announcement was likely to be a proposal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by somewhere between 2007 and 2010, slightly ahead of the U.S. target of 2008 to 2012.

Japan has suggested a five per cent cut and the European Union a 15 per cent cut by 2010.

Canada was likely to propose further reductions of five to 10 per cent in each of the following two five-year periods.

In any case, it proposes pushing back commitments reached at the Earth Summit in 1992 to hit 1990 levels by 2000, but will nonetheless require cuts of more than 10 per

cent from Canada's current levels.

Canada was also likely to join Japan in saying there should be differentiation to take into account "different countries' particular circumstances" — which environmentalists charge is a way of evading commitments.

The main greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, is caused by burning coal, oil and natural gas.

Many scientists say such gases act like greenhouse glass, warming the climate with potentially disastrous effects, though others question the science on this issue.

However, the Canadian government has had a difficult job convincing a snow-bound population that more warmth would hurt them, even if it might cause more serious problems elsewhere.

Kinshasa calm, government plays down army clashes

KINSHASA (R) — The Democratic Republic of the Congo's capital Kinshasa was calm Saturday after two separate clashes between rival groups of soldiers.

President Laurent Kabila's government sought to play down the affair.

Interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo angrily dismissed suggestions that up to 20 people had been killed in Friday's incidents, which included a shootout at the gates of the presidency.

The Malaksys Medical Association, however, warned against panic, saying cholera, a water-borne bacterial disease, could be easily prevented by taking simple precautions. Cholera germs can be killed by high heat.

Security barricades blocked the road to the presidency Saturday but the army had eased checks elsewhere. Life in the bustling capital was its usual Saturday self.

Witnesses said guards at the presidency opened fire Friday afternoon when a rival group of soldiers approached one entrance.

Mr. Kabila was working in his office at the time.

The cause of Friday's shooting, which also erupted in the early hours near a barracks, was not immediately clear.

Mr. Mwenze said the two clashes, which lasted no more than 30 minutes each, were unrelated.

He said "two jeeps full of armed men" began shooting around the city's Intercontinental Hotel. "The shooting spread all the way to the presidency," he added.

The army is restructuring after Mr. Kabila and his Rwandan allies toppled the late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May.

Pay disputes and internal ethnic rivalry have led to similar outbreaks of shooting in and around Kinshasa in the past.

Mr. Mwenze rejected any link between the shooting and the detention in the capital Tuesday of General Masasu Nindanga, widely regarded as democratic Congo's de facto army

chief.

"That's what the rumours say but so far the army hasn't identified any group that is a Masasu group. There isn't one in the army. If there is, it must be underground," he said.

Allies of Gen. Masasu warned earlier that his arrest, officially for disciplinary reasons, could have serious consequences.

Friday's first clash appears to have been sparked by the arrest of a young ethnic Tutsi soldier, according to various security sources.

Mr. Mwenze said that clash was between police units and soldiers breaking through their barricades.

Heat from Indonesian fires to be felt at climate meet

JAKARTA (AFP) — The widespread fires in Indonesia which cast a pall of smoke over most of Southeast Asia for months, loom heavy in the minds of southeast Asian delegates heading to the World Conference on the Climate in Japan next week.

"The fires have for the first time, provided the opportunity for Asian states to see that there is an immediate price to pay, now and not later, for not respecting the environment," an analyst with an international financial institution said.

The fires, mostly blamed on the indiscriminate use of slash and burn methods to clear land for fields, plantations and settlement, sent up thick smoke in May and the sky in several countries was

still covered with a thin haze in November.

The haze has caused serious health alerts in the region and led to disruption as well as accidents in air, land and water traffic.

At least 17 Indonesians have died from haze-related ailments while millions of others have had their health affected, officials say.

The fires have also affected the climate in several ways.

In the immediate aftermath, the fires in Indonesian forest, fields and peat and coal lands, released millions of cubic metres of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, leading to a drop in local temperatures.

In the longer term will come the effects from the dwindling forest surface fol-

lowing the fires.

Forests, including primary rain forests, absorb carbon dioxide and release much needed oxygen into the air.

Indonesia has 113 million hectares of rain forests, including 49 million hectares in protected areas.

The president of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, Sayed Babur Ali, has labelled the forest and ground fires in Indonesia "an international catastrophe."

A former chairman of Indonesia's leading environmental watchdog Walhi, George Aditjondro, has called it "the worst ecological disaster to have hit Asia since the Vietnam War."

The severe drought experienced by the country this year, partly due to the El Niño freak weather pattern,

also aggravated the fires and the haze.

While officials have said only around 300,000 hectares of forest and ground have been burned this year, Walhi's estimate put it at around 1.7 million hectares.

Indonesian Environment Minister Surwono Kusumaatmadja has said "hundreds" of years would be needed to restore the conditions of the burned forests.

President Suharto has declared the fires a national disaster and even made an unprecedented series of apologies to Indonesia's affected neighbours.

As Sri Lanka to the east, southern Thailand to the north, the Philippines to the east and Darwin on the northern coast of Australia to

the south.

Malaysia and Singapore, along with Indonesia, declared health emergencies after air pollution health safety standards were surpassed by the smoke haze and they have also seen tourism drop.

The thick acid smoke has reduced visibility to such dangerous levels that it is believed to have been behind several boat and air accidents that have claimed more than 300 lives.

The climate change meeting that will open in Kyoto, Japan, Monday will attract representatives from 166 countries which will try to hammer out an accord on reducing greenhouse gas emissions said to be responsible for global warming.

Jordan Times

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Challenge before new Parliament

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein opened the first session of the 13th Parliament yesterday, effectively calling on the newly-elected 80 deputies and the appointed 40 senators to leave their mark on parliamentary democracy in our country. The King's speech addressed, inter alia, the ups and downs in the peace process, the economic challenges that are facing the country and the government's programme for 1998.

It was not too long ago when the King raised the issue of the bureaucracy. It was the stifling red tape and the dismal state of orphan institutions in the Kingdom that prompted His Majesty to ask tough questions about the absence of public spirit in the conduct of state affairs. Nearly a year has passed since he sounded the alarm about the woes and ills of public service and not much has really been done to rectify them. Yesterday, His Majesty found it necessary to again remind the nation that much remains to be done, not only in fighting governmental routine but also in combating corruption, ending discrimination and violence against women and children.

On the external front, the faltering peace process, as expected, figured high in the King's speech. The Monarch met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu near London earlier this month to deliver to him an urgent and stern message: Unless the Israeli government moves more expeditiously in the direction of accommodation the stage will be set for drastic deterioration in the region's political and security climate. His Majesty alluded to this yesterday, but at the same time urged us to make a distinction between what the current Israeli government stands for and what the people there want and aspire to.

Yet the biggest challenge facing the Lower House is to vindicate the people's trust in them as true representatives of their aspirations. Given the absence of strong opposition due to the decision by Islamists and other political parties to boycott the Nov. 4 elections, the new parliamentarians are duty bound to prove their credentials as worthy of representing all the people. The country expected them not only to listen carefully to the Speech from the Throne but also to study and offer their own solutions. Deputies would likewise be called upon to raise other issues and submit new ideas on how to tackle them.

We certainly need a dynamic Parliament since the issues facing the country are getting more and more complex.

We trust that the opening of the 13th Parliament will usher in a new era in the democratic process that will vindicate and strengthen the nation's march towards democracy.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek Saturday said democracy has been on the retreat since its start in 1989, and the new Parliament is called on to redress the situation through legislation. He said the temporary Press and Publications Law is one of the negative aspects affecting democracy because it led to the closure of most of the weekly tabloids and caused opposition parties to boycott the general elections and the non-representation of the Islamists in Parliament. Jordanians expect the new parliament to take steps to achieve progress towards democracy and reflect a good image about the Kingdom to the outside world, he said. It is not enough to cancel the present Press and Publications Law or for the government to sell its shares in the daily newspapers, but Parliament is called on to introduce new and modern legislation on elections, press and publications and political parties. Dr. Fanek said, He said Parliament, which was elected by the people and which will elect its speaker, a key post within the democratic system, should be given the role of choosing a prime minister for the country either through direct voting in the House or through consultation with His Majesty the King.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab said he feared that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will fall under heavy pressure from the U.S. to accept the trivial offer of the Israeli government which entails a very limited withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian lands. Arafat has already rejected the Israeli offer which keeps most of the West Bank security and water resources under Israeli control and is demanding the full implementation of the Oslo accords which was endorsed by Washington, said Qallab. He said Arafat realises that he cannot withstand the U.S. pressure, especially if Washington involves Egypt or other Arab regimes in exercising pressure on him to accept the Israeli offer. Qallab said also that Arafat does not have the power like Netanyahu to resist the pressure and he is also exposed to pressure from certain Palestinian groups which advise him to accept whatever Israel offers at the moment and continue demanding the full implementation of the Oslo accords later. He said Arafat is in for a very difficult situation especially if Netanyahu succeeds in holding his coalition government together and secures all his ministers' support for his offer to the Palestinians.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Survey should spur more action, less debate

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

AT LONG last, the results of the survey on unemployment in Jordan conducted by the Centre for Strategic Studies of the University of Jordan (CSS) were made public last week after several months of delay.

Unemployment was reportedly a whopping 27.5 per cent. Understandably the government, represented by its Ministry of Planning, was not happy with the results of the survey because the figure arrived at for unemployment, the government claims, is too high to be credible, and that the publication of such a survey will paint a dark picture and cause confusion.

It is true that some political opposition groups will welcome the new revelation and use it to further embarrass the government, even though those groups lack any alternative to the policies and measures put forward and implemented by the government. Despite the disclosures of this finding, the sky did not fall and public confidence in the economy was unaffected.

The importance of coming up with accurate figures regarding unemployment and other social phenomena to enable decision makers to adapt the right policies was always overemphasised. As a matter of fact the effective solutions and the right policies to deal with unemployment of 27 per cent which, the survey suggests, are not that different from those needed to combat unemployment of 15 per cent, the rate the government likes to

believe is accurate.

However, the publication of the survey may sharpen the public awareness of this social and economic problem. Naturally, the new light shed on the status and extent of unemployment will put the government under more pressure to face the problem and do more to alleviate it.

We know that the Ministry of Planning questions the credibility of the centre's survey and does not believe its findings, which surprised not only the officials of the ministry but observers and analysts as well. The ministry has its own reservations and objections to the concept and methodology of the survey. But even if the ministry will embrace the survey, it will hardly change its behaviour or alter its plans already under way. The publication will only serve to make the ministry take the heat and come under more pressure from the public to act more forcefully and try to make the economy generate more jobs.

The CSS was planning to present the concepts, methodology, definitions and results of the survey to a group of specialists in a workshop to evaluate and analyse the project. For some reason the centre did away with this plan, and went directly to the press. Thus we were unable to reconcile the figures produced by the survey as of December 1996 with the figures produced by the Department of Statistics two years earlier.

The rate of unemployment reached by the survey could

have been reduced tremendously had the survey accounted for unemployment between age 18 to 60 instead of 15 to 64. Unemployment would have also been lower had a person been considered unemployed if he did not work during the past week or month, but not the previous day as the survey did. It would be lower if the reasons for not working in the day preceding the survey were considered. For instance a person may be out of work in a given day due to illness, weather conditions especially in December, or due to personal or family reasons which has nothing to do with unemployment in its strict economic sense. The centre argues that, unlike the Department of Statistics it employed the standards approved by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

It is not in the interest of the centre, nor the government or observers and analysts to purposely overstate or understate the level of unemployment. What counts is that we have — a very high rate of unemployment, and the government should work harder to enable the economy generate more jobs. The accuracy of the figure becomes important in case of comparison, i.e., if the survey is repeated after one or two years to determine the current state of unemployment. Perhaps the centre should conduct a similar survey in December 1998 using the same sample and applying the same methodology.

Letter from Scotland

Hope for confidence building measures are dashed with dwindling peace process, Iraqi-U.N. stand-off

By Peter Hinchcliffe

AN IDEA I put to His Royal Highness over 18 months ago came to fruition with Crown Prince Hassan's visit to the University of Edinburgh on November 27. Prince Hassan had been invited to give the inaugural address to the newly renamed and reconstituted Institute for Middle Eastern Studies — about which I wrote in a previous letter. A packed hall — every chair taken — listened to an interesting and thoughtful account of recent developments in the Middle East entitled "Middle East in Crisis: Challenges and Responses." He also responded to several questions from the audience including a number from Jordanian students studying at the university. I counted 17 of them covering several academic disciplines.

Given present circumstances in the region Crown Prince Hassan was naturally enough fairly downbeat about progress towards a comprehensive peace. I was particularly interested to hear his references to the need for a framework for confidence building in the region to cover issues wider than just those confined to Arab/Israeli. This seemed to be an echo of the idea of establishing an Organisation for Cooperation and Security in the Middle East (OCSME) as proposed by Malcolm Rifkind, Britain's former Conservative foreign secretary, in a speech he made in Abu Dhabi last November. In making his proposal Rifkind gave some of the credit for the idea to Crown Prince Hassan who had long been advocating a

structure in the area roughly modelled on the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe which has had such success, even within the context of the cold war, in building bridges between East and West in Europe. Sadly Jordan was one of the few Arab countries to warmly endorse the Rifkind proposal, and it has died with much of the peace process. The suspicion, especially voiced by Egypt, was that such an organisation might serve an Israeli agenda — normalisation with the Arabs and all that — and also divert attention from the central issue of the Middle East peace process.

Iraq has been very much in the news recently, and Crown Prince Hassan answered some questions on the issue after his lecture. There is considerable sympathy for the effects of sanctions on the ordinary Iraqi — particularly the more vulnerable sectors of the community. There is less sympathy for Saddam Hussein himself and several commentators have pointed out that his priorities appear strange given the state of Iraq's economy. More emphasis is needed on projects to benefit the Iraqi people and less on re-arming Iraq's forces and on the building of grandiose "victory" monuments and presidential palaces. As a writer in the Scotsman (Scotland's national newspaper) pointed out, Saddam Hussein and his immediate Takriti cronies can totally insulate themselves from the effect of sanctions and can afford to manipulate the suffering of their countrymen for their own purposes —

creating sympathy for Iraq (including the regime) in the Arab World. Sympathy for the Iraqi people is well merited but hardly for the regime, given its record. Have people got such short memories? Ask the Kuwaitis and ask the Kurds of Halabja!

The British press coverage of the recent crisis over the arms inspectors fully covers the point of linkage between sanctions against Iraq and stalemate in the peace process. There have been references to U.S. policy "crumbling" (as the Guardian put it) and it goes on: "Arab states are frustrated by the U.S. inability to reactivate the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, and they have no incentive to stick their necks out for the U.S. on Iraq when Washington is reluctant to reciprocate over Israel."

There is less comfort for Baghdad over the substance of the inspector's crisis however. Most serious papers agree that on their individual merits the questions of peace and the need to do away with Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have to be kept separate. The Economist argues that the Iraqi regime knows well when sanctions will be lifted and what needs to be done to achieve this. It will be when UNSCOM reports to the Security Council that its job is done. And then (this is my guess) it will be important that the U.N. itself honours Security Council Resolution 697 and allows the resumption of Iraqi oil exports. No new conditions should be laid down. In the meanwhile, given our experiences with the

Iraqi president, it would be a grave and potentially dangerous mistake to pull UNSCOM out.

I mention short memories. I was in Amman when Hussein Kamal defected. I well remember how he revealed the extent of the Iraqi regime's consistent campaign of deception with regard to their relationship with UNSCOM. As the Economist put it: the inspectors and the Atomic Energy Authority tracked down Iraq's nuclear "bits and pieces, most of its missiles and a goodly portion of its chemical arsenal — all of it in the teeth of Iraqi lies, obstruction and, at times, direct threats to the inspectors." As for biological weapons UNSCOM's report described this area as "unredeemed by progress or any approximation of the known facts." There is unfinished work to be done.

It is a dilemma. No humane person wants the Iraqi people to continue to suffer. No sensible person wants Saddam Hussein to have the means to once again threaten his neighbours or his own people with such terrible weapons. We seem powerless to bend Israel to our will for the moment but we can continue to do something about Iraq under its present leadership. One wrong and one right do not equal two wrongs. Or have I missed something?

The writer, a retired diplomat, was the British ambassador to Jordan until March. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

'Governments must relinquish control of telecommunications technology'

The following is an address by Jamal Sarayrah, former minister of post and telecommunications, at the Arab Telecoms Forum 97 "Telecoms Development," held in Bahrain Nov. 24-26, 1997.

BECAUSE GOVERNMENTS are not the best providers of technology, and because excessive government involvement in the market may lead to inappropriate or inferior standards to those required by the market, governments must forego their control of telecommunications technology.

In many of the Arab countries, the progress of privatisation programmes, and despite the best of intent has become bogged down by bureaucracy and apprehension. Even those countries that have actually started to privatise their telecommunications markets, are either moving too slowly or not moving at all.

We must remember that progress is always relative. We must never view progress in absolute, but in relative terms. Others do not stand still while one is moving. They too move and they too are making advances. Successes should never be measured but in relation to other successes, never in relation to past inadequacies and failures. Most importantly, we must lay down the infrastructure necessary to advance concomitantly with telecommunications technology.

In line with our desires and aspirations, Arab governments must speedily move out

of markets by deregulating them. To ensure that the operators' services are state-of-the-art, the role of the government is simply that of a provider of a level playing field. Existing and potential suppliers of on-line and off-line services should never have to compete with the government of a country in the provision of a telecommunications service; they simply won't. Technology will not flow into a controlled market at a pace commensurate with the rate of change of technology in the advanced world or in liberalised markets. It simply won't.

Governments that have controlled the telecommunications market as a means of suppressing freedoms and maintaining security controls have ultimately failed. In the very near future, an Arab citizen may be able to purchase a chip through which he/she may garner access to the global telecommunications infrastructure; thus, bypassing all security systems and cruising the telecommunications superhighway. Losing control will soon become the modus operandi, this is inevitable.

Furthermore, controlling telecommunications markets as a means for generating revenues, in a manner similar to that of taxes, should also become a practice of the past. The success of the U.S. economy, which sustained tremendous growth rates over the past six years, is testimony to the benefits of liberalising telecommunications markets.

We too can be successful. After all, a superhighway has existed in the Arab World

since ancient times when caravan routes traversed our lands and seafarers visited our ports; now the new superhighway that crisscrosses the land should be the telecommunications highway. In this highway we must establish a "virtual presence" in technology. And as the information superhighway becomes increasing well travelled, we, in the Arab World will become more prosperous and productive. Advancing the welfare of this and future generations depends not on the resources we have been endowed with, but on the choices we make today. In short, our region can not become competitive without the technology of tomorrow coming to play in our lives now.

Competition will speed up innovation and the cost-effectiveness of new technologies. Demand should become the designer of the market. This can only be achieved through allowing the imagination and tastes of the users to shape the market and the future of technology. Sophisticated consumers will demand better quality products. Unencumbered producers, operating in an open economy, will meet the challenges of tomorrow and provide quality services.

We must all move fast in updating or creating our regulatory structures. As a first step toward drawing new and up-to-date policies, we should first establish partnerships between the private and public sectors. These partnerships are for the creation of modern markets: they should not be conspiracies against markets. Government and

industry must develop new standards and policies. The open exchange of ideas between both sectors should be the cornerstone of further policy to ensure a wider, and pothole-free information superhighway.

The main and most important policy should be the guarantee that the regulator is not also the operator in the area of information networks. I have learnt from past experiences as a minister of telecommunications that this policy is a vital signal to all interested parties. All competitors are thus aware of the intent of the government to provide a modern telecommunications market. Moreover, this policy underscores that quality advancement and availability are our top most priorities.

Telecommunications technology is but one of many vital steps that need to be taken toward becoming a highly advanced society and becoming fully integrated in the global village. Deregulation is also, if I may add, the most important step a nation can presently make. We should be moving fast, at full speed through licensing private sector operators and setting minimal standards while providing the basic necessary regulatory and legislative infrastructure. I honestly believe that the Arab World is at the threshold of leapingfrogging technology and winning the future. And I also believe that among us today, in this august gathering is the decision and the resolve to make tomorrow different. Let's not wait too long.

LETTERS

To the Editor:

I WAS heartened to see the photo of the four Americans in the Nov. 22 issue of the Jordan Times. May they accomplish their mission. We should remember that the Iraqis are now facing the greatest crises of their country's existence — continued mass killing by starvation.

The latest figures now say that the Iraqis are dying at the rate of two every minute due to the U.S. led "sanctions" (I prefer the word siege) on their country. Meanwhile, in the United States, it is the "Holiday Season." People here will be stuffing themselves until they hurt, while not only the Iraqis are starving, but people in their own country — dying in the streets every day. Most our buses will not take you into the areas where

Facing up to the 'system'

the homeless live, but you can see them pathetically curled up in doorways and in cardboard boxes trying to stay warm.

In Islam, this would be a failure of the government, and the government would move to find them housing. Not so in the U.S. In a society where you are literally one paycheck away from disaster (homelessness) the new laws are taking away what safety-net was available. Meanwhile, the American people are being told that it is the blacks and the Hispanics who are guilty of "mucking" the system.

What their thoughts are as they step over that poor, freezing soul in the doorway one can only guess, if they

have thoughts at all. That is why it is so important to stand up to the American government now, before it consolidates its control over the world, and imposes this system on the rest of humanity.

It is not right to make war on innocent men, women, and children while you support Israel's land grabs and shootings. Indonesia's massacring of the East Timorese, and every low-life dictator in South America who will give up his people to the low-wage slavery of the U.S. and multinational corporations.

Sheila B. Cassidy
 Riverside, California
 USA

هنا عن الفصل

King opens 13th Parliament

Government to introduce new laws governing unions, political parties

Following is the full text of His Majesty King Hussein's Speech from the Throne at the opening of the 13th Parliament's First Ordinary Session, Saturday.

IN THE name of God the most Merciful, the most Compassionate. And peace and prayers be upon His Arab Hashemite Prophet.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

Peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessings.

In the name of God and with His blessings, I declare open the first session of the 13th Jordanian Parliament.

I praise the Almighty for having maintained the constant and stable legitimacy of this rule and protected its Islamic reference since the beginning, through the Great Arab Revolt, and until this day. God willing, it will continue until we achieve the high and noble objectives for which this Revolt was launched.

It is the will of God Almighty that the meeting of your esteemed assembly coincides with the end of the 20th century and the dawn of the 21st century. So it may — God willing — be a blessed model of our country in the new century, and an able vanguard to face the challenges it carries with all the required efforts and sacrifices.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

Your very House was born out of the honest determination of the sincere and faithful people of our country. It came as an expression of the free will of the voters in cities and towns, the countryside and the Badia, and the refugee camps, to become an embodiment of the nation's will to put you at the core of national responsibility and in the centre of effectiveness and influence.

While the government committed itself and delivered a free and fair election within the time specified by the law and the Constitution, the results of this election have taken us from a climate of full freedom and equal opportunities to a new stage of many duties and responsibilities, objectives and goals, which we trust you have the determination to face and the ability to achieve.

And as we aspired from the outset to see everyone participate in that election, we will always be keen for the freedom of people to have their own opinions so that the difference of opinions remains a high-grade and healthy enrichment of our political life along with the pluralism that garnishes democracy.

Therefore, congratulations to those who won the confidence of the people and the voice of our nation, and felicitations to the nation for the allegiance and dedication of its sons.

The family or the tribe in our country — as in every country — is one of the cells of society, which make up the entire people. It maintains society's lofty ideals, protects its noble values, and moves its beautiful traditions and generous customs forward.

The family — like the tribe in this precious homeland — has always been a source of goodness and an aide of honour and pride. It has never been — may God forbid — a burden or a source of blemish, nor has it been a shortcoming or a censure.

So joy to you for having come from those blessed sources, and joyous may the state be in you.

Each one of you is from this homeland and for this homeland. The homeland is for every family, every tribe, and every citizen in the north, south, east or west alike.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

The basic support to the democracy we enjoy — and any other democracy — rests upon the sincere and continuous cooperation between the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches. This is followed by their cooperation with the political powers and civil society's institutions. Finally, a combined cooperation with the people collectively or the nation in its entirety.

A modern society is one of complementarity, harmony, solidarity and mutual assistance. It is not a society of estrangement, alienation, severed rela-

tions, and crossing lines.

Governments may come and go, parliaments may change or regenerate, and the Judiciary may develop and change... but the state which flanks these powers under its wings is the one that remains. This is because the people — first and last — are everlasting and regenerating throughout time.

All the undertakings of the government in every field are to the state and for the state. The media is that of the state, so is health, agriculture, and so on.

Any such activity or effort should not be allowed to dwindle, retract or one day be belittled in a way that it becomes attributed to other than the state.

Since the employee is government's main tool to fulfil its duties towards the citizen and the country, he is the one who should be loyal to the people's interest and concerns... faithful to their hopes and aspirations.

The employee is the means to build the cornerstone and structures of the state. It is for this, that he must be the object of care and appreciation just as he should always be worthy of such care and appreciation.

If bureaucracy is civil service's enemy number one, then corruption is the most destructive tool that demolishes the pillars of that service and destroys every hope of advancement.

No one in the nation or the state should be more motivated to fight off these two arch enemies of progress and advancement than the employee himself, who is the core of sound management and the nerve of dignified and pulsating life.

But our society, honourable Senators and Deputies, should not be one of "government jobs," where the chair is the nation, and the job is the cause. It is then where things lose their value and meaning, and where the people lose their ideals, dreams and hopes.

Our homeland should collectively transform into a perpetual workshop. Each one of its sons should have his role and responsibilities. The writer and the artist... the labourer and the farmer... the employee and the professional.

A workshop with no place for spectators and negligent people.

The building of a homeland is like life itself: continuous and perpetual. And if the sons of this country do not build it, then they have no right to idly criticise and complain, nor to derogate or defame. They should have no right to expect others to build their country for them.

Nation-building is an effort, dedication, loyalty, and belonging. Each one of you should give his best effort and all his potential to this country.

And just as this applies to every citizen, it certainly should apply to all the branches of government and authorities. Any branch must not just watch the performance of another, but each must complement the work of the other.

They must all move in harmony... and along with the people, they can all become like a magnificent orchestra that always performs one symphony: that of the nation.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

The work of the Legislative branch emanating from this blessed citadel is just as a source of pride to the state as the work of the Executive.

Synonymous to them is the work of the independent Judiciary that spreads the meaning of justice throughout the state, without which no rule is upright; deep-roots the values of righteousness, without which no life is worthy; and protects the reality of freedom, without which man's humanity does not materialise.

And just as the member of the Legislative branch should be a sincere and honest expression of the will of the people, every member of the Judiciary should be a sincere and honest expression of the people's ideals, values, and virtues.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

It is because of all this and other state objectives that my government will present to your esteemed assembly a package of laws and legislation. Some will modernise and develop existing laws and legislation, while others will

come to open new horizons of development and construction.

Foremost among them is a new election law that takes into consideration the changes and developments of this age, establishes increased equality and justice among all the people, and maintains the constants of our national march.

The government will also present to the distinguished assembly new legislation that aims at developing the political parties and professional unions laws in order to guarantee better performance, to regulate practices, and — God willing — to protect the rights of the people and the interests of the homeland.

My government had presented the esteemed House with a Press and Publications Law, which was issued in its temporary form as a response to a wish by the previous Parliament.

This came as the noble profession of journalism became afflicted with what its enemies and the enemies of this nation wished.

It also came when some of those who intruded on the press took the profession of mourning the homeland, the state and the people, of challenging and defaming our values and ideals, and of transgressing public and private affairs and interests.

That temporary law did not come to limit freedoms or gag mouths, nor did it come to belittle any real achievement by the previous law. Instead, it aimed at regulating the press sector, which is from the state to the state and from the people to the people.

It also aimed at defining the rights and obligation of this sector.

Because a fair and impartial Judiciary that understands and reacts to changes is in the forefront of the firm basics of the state of the law and institutions, my government will continue its efforts to upgrade the legislation and institutions of the Judiciary. This is being done according to a plan that guarantees the best working conditions and resources.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

Our Armed Forces, the brave military establishment, will be as always an example of pride and dignity for the country and the people. Our forces have always been our companion through all our country's peaks of glory.

They, along with our trusted security establishment, have the distinguished role of protecting the country and the citizens, and maintaining society's safety and security.

With great national awareness, true belonging, and unshaken loyalty, they have been an example of efficiency and discipline, and a model of refined manners and noble behaviour in the region and the world at large.

Their role was not restricted to home, but went beyond, reaching various international spots, where they contributed to keeping international peace in many countries and places. There, they have reflected the finest example of Arab morality and the refined Jordanian character and attributes.

With my direct guidance, my government will provide all the support these two establishments deserve to develop their capabilities and advance their potential. This will be done in the framework of the best balance between experience, rehabilitation, and management of resources that will enable them to carry out their mission both at home and on every other level.

My government will continue its support of the Retired Servicemen's Organisation to help expand its vital activities and diversify its basic services as a means to fulfil its economic and social objectives, and in recognition for its members' great and honourable efforts in the service of their beloved country.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

Peace was never but a strategic choice for us and for our brethren in the great Arab homeland.

We, in Jordan, have wanted — and still want — a comprehensive and permanent peace built on justice and based on international law and obligations.

In this context, peace is not just a Jordanian choice, but also the choice

of all other parties. It is the choice of peoples as much as we hope it to be the choice of leaders.

The peace process has faltered recently as a result of the Israeli government's obstinacy and stubbornness. But we remain in firm belief that people's determination in the choice of peace will finally overcome all the obstacles until the entire region enjoys its dream of progress and prosperity.

We have provided the Palestinian Authority with all the brotherly and sincere support throughout different times and stages.

We will continue to support our brothers, today and in the future, towards attaining the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and establishing their independent state on their national soil, with its capital in Jerusalem.

We have maintained our eagerness, as we have always been, for continued coordination with our brothers in the Arab World, particularly with Egypt, in the service of the peace process on the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

Because cooperation and coordination with the Arab brothers is a basic cornerstone of Jordanian thought and practice, I have exerted great efforts in that direction by means of direct meetings with Arab leaders and officials. This was complemented by activating agreements and joint committees, and by commitment to the various Arab decisions and resolutions.

The suffering of the brotherly Iraqi people has been a source of deep agony to us and to many people around the world. And from here, we stand with all our capabilities for the lifting of our people's suffering within the framework of maintaining and preserving the national territorial integrity of that brotherly country.

The Arab state of affairs at this moment of modern Arab history and beyond requires all the cooperation and understanding.

This state of affairs lacks clarity and truthfulness, more than at any other time, and is not conducive to proper dealings and to building relations. It certainly, in light of the true Arab interest, lacks a way out of the circle of slander and vilification, and the patterns of accusations and condemnations. It also lacks logic, wisdom and the means to build friendships as well as positive and fruitful relations.

As for Israel, a distinction should be drawn between the position of the government and the position of the people. We must stop serving the current Israeli position through our old and worn out ways and means. By that, we stand to win or lose.

Our nation has had enough of the patterns of defamation and curses. It is time for some of its sons to grow up and fear God in the affairs of their people and the destiny of their nation, particularly at this time, which is characterised by the establishment of unions, agreements, and groupings.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

My government has followed up on the efforts in the economic and financial spheres, completing the biggest part of legislation and basic arrangements, particularly those aimed at liberating the national economy from administrative constraints.

It laid down a carefully studied programme for privatisation as well as joining the World Trade Organisation and the European partnership, and creating an Arab free trade zone.

The government continued its efforts in the areas of industrial development, increasing exports, and developing trade zones and major joint projects, as well as transforming Aqaba into an investment-attracting free trade zone.

My government also continued to implement the economic adjustment programme, which helped raise growth levels and hard currency reserves, in addition to maintaining monetary stability.

It continued to develop the social security package and create employment opportunities for the Jordanian labour force both at home and in brotherly and friendly countries.

The private sector has always had a leading role in building our country and serving our national economy. National capital has always been a source of pride in our dearest Jordan.

Because of the constantly growing role of this important sector, the gov-

ernment will do its utmost to boost that role in the framework of full cooperation and joint effort.

Furthermore, the government has accomplished intensive and well planned progress in restructuring public sector services like transport, telecommunications and energy with the aim of elevating its efficiency and developing its production.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

The role of women today has become more important and crucial than at any other time.

The Jordanian woman has excelled in the field of education and succeeded in different professions and contributions in the various organisations.

Her support of official efforts to serve society and develop the country-side has become stronger. She also began to take part in the political life, becoming an important pillar of the democratic structure.

This is why we must all pay serious attention to some of the dangerous phenomena that remain a source of women's suffering, and which — unfortunately — constitute an inhuman violation of their basic rights.

The most serious and dangerous of those is the visible and hidden violence, which was the focus of many international conferences. This does not benefit our Arab and Islamic society: The society of solidarity. It is a flagrant contradiction with our ongoing calls to preserve human dignity and all human rights.

As for the children, and despite all laudable efforts, there remains a number of negative, harmful and shameful practices that we must all confront with rigour and determination.

The child is also another victim of various forms of violence whether at home or in society. In the former, he is victimised under the pretext of discipline and upbringing, and in the latter by vagrancy and exploitation.

A quick look around us shows an increase in street-children either begging or being used in various selling schemes. All this leads many of our own flesh and blood into the abyss of delinquency and the depth of poverty and vagrancy.

Therefore, in cooperation with your esteemed assembly, my government will seek to fight off these dangers in an effort to raise our society to the levels of our ambitions.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

My government worked to make the 1998 budget reflect our future direction towards economic and social development.

The budget will place adequate emphasis on housing projects, development funds, and the various tourist projects as well as expanding rehabilitation and training programmes and increasing investment incentives in the governorates.

The government, while laying down the 1998-2002 Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plan, with my support and the supervision of my brother Crown Prince Al Hassan, has taken into consideration the sound strategic management of resources as the basis of that plan and the emanating programmes.

In the plan, the government will give the governorates distinctive developmental and economic dimensions, while health care and universal health insurance will figure as a main component.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

The new twenty-first century is knocking on our doors. And if our journey through the recent decades of the twentieth century was filled with difficulties and challenges, they were also abundant with achievements and victories, praise be to the Almighty.

Just as the human being was our main and only resource during that long and hard journey, he will always be that in the times ahead. He is our means to reach more success and glory.

Our most important entry into the new century should be through our strong national unity, based on cooperation and brotherhood in the frame-

work of a young and modern state, whose cornerstones are stable institutions, whose reference is the constitution, the law and the national charter, and whose way is democracy, pluralism, responsible freedom, and the security and dignity of man.

It is the unity that seeks to build a modern and strong society that preserves its national character and Arab identity, and is eager to work and to react with the world with an open mind.

Science and technology is another entry into the new century. The economy of the entire future is that of scientific and technological applications. Scientific and technological research is the propelling power towards achieving the highest degrees of excellence and performance. We must work to raise the level of research centres closer to the in the advanced countries, with God's help.

Education and culture are also a means of entry into the next and other centuries. They are the perfect means to the perfect life of individuals and people.

It is from here that the need arises for a revision of the current educational and cultural programmes in a manner that befits a modern state.

We have enough self-confidence, attachment to our roots, purity of culture, and humanity in our national and religious values to protect us from blowing winds.

Identity diminishes and disappears with isolation and seclusion. Personality is reduced and deformed with depleted thoughts and a stagnant mind. Thus a stagnant culture rusts and is lost.

The bright image of Islam with its values, moderation, centrism, keenness for human dignity, and creation of the concept of Shura and dialogue will always be our source of pride. It is our means to convince the world that we, Arabs and Muslims, are far from fanaticism, that we love peace and prosperity, and that we are real partners in the making of human civilisation.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

Our most sincere call for advancing, boosting and protecting the concept of the state. The avenues and fields of governing are growing, increasing, developing and flourishing. They all form part of the state's existence and solid structures.

This embraces in pride with the struggle and sacrifice of the people to give the state all the glory and to give our Jordanian human being — on this and every land — his self and national pride.

One of our most important and sacred duties will be protecting the concept of the people from disintegration and deterioration and rejecting all contradicting practices and behavioural patterns.

The only geography which can govern, control, and decide our direction is our national geography... the geography of the one nation, the one people, and the one state.

Jordan is the homeland, its population is the people, and all the powers and elements of rule are the state.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Deputies,

I congratulate you for the people's confidence, and invite you to shoulder your responsibilities as representatives of the entire people and not of a specific region; to be honourable nationalists, who keep their promise and follow the righteous path; and to consult your affairs among yourselves; to be committed to the Constitution, and respectful of the law and the charter.

This way Jordan, with you and through you, can enter the new century with strength and confidence just as God Almighty wanted and just as we wish it to be.

God Almighty said: "Work... for God will soon observe your work, and his Apostle and the believers."

Surat al-Tawbah (105)

Peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessings.

New laws to be introduced to House — King

(Continued from page 1)

speech on the importance of participation by all political parties and shades but said their absence was a reflection of the country's respect for freedom of choice.

"As we aspired from the outset to see everyone participate in the election, we will always be keen for the freedom of people to have their own opinions so that the difference of opinions remains a high-grade and healthy enrichment of our political life along with the pluralism that garnishes democracy," the

King said. One leftist deputy, Khalil Haddadin and two former IAF members, Abdullah Akaleh and Mohammad Azideh, who went against their party's boycott decision, are present in this Parliament. The final make-up of Parliament shows the dominance of tribal leaders and centrist deputies.

In reference to the criticism of the dominance of tribalists over the Lower House, the King paid high tribute to the structure of the family and the tribe and their positive effects on the society.

"The family or the tribe in our country, as in every country, is one of the cells of society which make up the entire people. It maintains society's lofty ideals, protects its noble values, and moves its beautiful traditions and generous customs forward," the King said. "The family like the tribe in this precious homeland has always been a source of goodness and an aide of honour and pride. It has never been — may God forbid — a burden or a source of blemish, nor has it been a shortcoming or a censure."

Masri convicted of killing children, sentenced to life

(Continued from page 1)

as the tribunal, headed by Judge Mohammad Ajameh and including Judges Mithab Mubidin and Issa Hamdan, delivered the verdict, and asked his sisters present in the courtroom to take care of his parents.

The court also convicted Masri of an earlier attempt to kill his wife and two children by opening a gas cylinder while the three slept in August 1996, and sentenced him to five years

imprisonment term.

Masri's mother E'tedal Hejazi collapsed in court upon hearing her son's conviction.

In its 33-page ruling, the court dismissed the defence's arguments that Masri was subject to duress and stated that it relied on the defendant's "willing confession to the authorities and his remorseful attitude towards the murder."

"The defence did not submit any evidence to prove that his client was forced to confess.

Instead, Masri confessed willingly in front of his wife, father, and investigators that he killed his children," the court said.

The court also said it rejected the attorney's request to have his client undergo a mental health examination. "During the course of the trial, the tribunal did not notice any peculiar behaviour by the defendant, and the attorney did not submit any evidence to indicate that Masri suffers from any mental health

problems," the court said.

However, in January Masri retracted his previous confessions, claiming in court that all his statements were fabricated to avoid psychological pressure exerted on him by the authorities.

Masri said he decided to confess that he killed his children "because the authorities threatened to question my mother and wife instead of me, and they both suffer from health prob-

lems."

The court papers stated that Masri had persistent quarrels with his wife following their 1987 marriage, and started encountering financial problems after the birth of the first child.

Further, the prosecution has cited jealousy as another motive for the murder, since "his wife paid more attention to his children and they were more attached to their mother."

Investors target bank shares at AFM

Answer: What the tired passengers turned the coach car into - A SLEEPER

ARIES
21 to April 19: This is one of your best years this year to get away. There's a surprise due at there. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

TAURUS
20 to May 20: Money is the name of the game. You'll get enough from the bank to keep you going. You'll get enough from the bank to keep you going. You'll get enough from the bank to keep you going.

GEMINI
21 to June 21: This could be an interesting year. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

CANCER
22 to July 22: You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

LEO
23 to Aug. 22: This is an excellent day. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

VIRGO
23 to September 22: You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

LIBRA
23 to October 22: This is an excellent day. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

SCORPIO
23 to November 22: You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

SAGITTARIUS
23 to December 22: This is an excellent day. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

CAPRICORN
23 to January 22: You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

AQUARIUS
23 to February 22: This is an excellent day. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

PISCES
23 to March 22: You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things. You'll have the chance to try some new things.

BETTER HALF
By Glasgow

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Business & Finance

Jordan Times, Sunday, November 30, 1997

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

South Africans seek investment ventures with Jordanian businessmen

**** THE EMBASSY** of South Africa in Jordan is currently taking the initiative to promote the country economically and commercially in the Middle East in addition to consolidating trade with Jordan. According to Ambassador H.B. de Bruyn, the embassy has many inquiries and requests from South African businessmen and investors about the opportunities and possibilities of investing in Jordan in all sectors especially those in the fields of industry, trade and technology exchange.

The ambassador said his country is eyeing the possibility of using the port of Aqaba as a reexport point to neighbouring countries in the Middle East. He mentioned that the Jordanian Businessmen Association is currently organising a delegation to visit South Africa after the Holy Month of Ramadan. "The delegation will comprise various sectors, especially the industrial one, with the aim of discussing investment and industrial opportunities," Mr. De Bruyn indicated.

Mr. Bruyn admitted that the trade balance is in favour of South Africa at present but he said: "We are currently working to overcome that as there are many promising opportunities to set up joint investments especially as the South African industries are highly advanced. He added that South Africa supplies Jordan with steel and iron which are reexported to neighbouring countries (Al Aswaq).

Public Transport Corporation to be closed down in 1999 due to losses

**** THE PUBLIC** Transport Corporation (PTC) has become a losing entity costing the state JD100,000 a month, Transport Minister Bassam Saket has said. Noting that the corporation does not transport more than six per cent of those who use public transport, the minister indicated that by closing down the PTC, the treasury will be saving more than JD100,000 a month in addition to easing traffic congestion and contributing to a cleaner environment.

"The government has taken a decision to stop PTC operations from March 1, 1999 and substitute the corporation by two new companies that would have unified specifications and would give due consideration to time and environment aspects," Dr. Saket said. He added that there will be a restructuring of the routes and an opening of new lines in order to make the renovation of buses a successful process.

The companies should start operating from April 1, 1999. (Al Dustour).

Analysis weighs strength, performance of banks

By Samir Ghawi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — According to an analysis of the achievements of the banks in Jordan during 1996, the Cairo Amman Bank and ANZ Grindlays recorded the highest growth in assets and deposits while the Arab Bank and the Housing Bank remained at the top of the list in terms of the size of assets and deposits.

The analysis, the 14th in a series of annual researches conducted by Mufleh Aqel, a prominent banker and financial analyst, covers the year-end results of 18 Jordanian and foreign banks operating in the Kingdom.

At the end of last year, the total assets of the 18 banks amounted to JD7,361.9 million of which the share of the Arab Bank and the Housing Bank was JD2,711.4 million (36.8 per cent) and JD1,124.1 million (15.3 per cent) respectively.

Ranking in third, fourth and fifth place were the Jordan Islamic Bank, the Cairo Amman Bank and the Bank of Jordan with assets totalling JD618.7 million (8.4 per cent), JD481.1 million (6.5 per cent) and JD429 million (5.8 per cent) respectively.

The Cairo Amman Bank recorded the highest rate of growth as it boosted total assets by 15.3 per cent followed by ANZ Grindlays which registered a growth rate of 14.9 per cent. ANZ Grindlays posted JD204 million in total assets and ranked in ninth place among the 18 banks.

High growth rates were also achieved by the Bank of Jordan, the Jordan Kuwait Bank and the BritishBank as their assets were raised by 13.8 per cent, 11.8 per cent and 11.3 per cent respectively. These banks, in addition to the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank and the others mentioned earlier formed the first ten banks in terms of the size of assets.

The Cairo Amman Bank and ANZ Grindlays also recorded the highest growth rates in deposits as they were boosted by 17.5 per cent and 14.2 per cent respectively. Other banks registering high growth in deposits were the Jordan Kuwait Bank (14.1 per cent) and the BritishBank and the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank, both achieving a 10.2 per cent rise.

However, the Arab Bank, the Housing Bank and the Jordan Islamic Bank remained in hold of the top three ranks in terms of the size of deposits.

Out of the JD6,158.6 million in total deposits, the share of the Arab Bank was JD2,373.8 million (38.5 per cent) followed by the Housing Bank with a JD909.2 million (14.8 per cent) share and the Jordan Islamic Bank at JD524.6 million (8.5 per cent).

The high growth rate posted by the Cairo Amman Bank took the bank into fourth place with deposits totalling JD417 million. The total of ANZ Grindlays was JD184.7 million placing it in eighth place.

The fifth, sixth and seventh places were taken by the Bank of Jordan (JD273.9 million), the Jordan Kuwait Bank (JD234.2 million) and the BritishBank (JD188.4 million).

Measured by the volume of equity, the top three ranks were taken by the same three giants, namely the Arab Bank (JD94.7 million), the Housing Bank (JD77.7 million) and the Jordan Islamic Bank (JD43.8 million).

In fourth place, the Arab Jordan Investment Bank had a JD25.5 million total equity and was followed by the Cairo Amman Bank (JD25 million) and the Bank of Jordan (JD24.2 million).

Below the 10 million mark, the Middle East Investment Bank and the Philadelphia Investment Bank were listed with JD9.4 million and JD5.7 million respectively. The Jordan Gulf Bank was at the end of the list with a JD30.2 million negative equity.

The total equity of the 18 banks amounted to JD420.1 million, the analysis showed.

The analysis measured the equity to deposits and, as such, the Exports and Finance Bank topped the list with 76.7 per cent. The banks which followed recorded much lower rates as the Middle East Investment Bank, the Arab Jordan Investment Bank and the Union for Saving and Investment measured 18.6 per cent, 14.3 per cent and 13.8 per cent respectively.

Noting that the general average of the equity to deposits percentage was 6.8 per cent, the Arab Bank scored 4.0 per cent and the Cairo Amman Bank measured 6.0 per cent. Closer to the average was ANZ Grindlays which, in 15th place, stood at 6.7 per cent.

The Jordan Gulf Bank trailed with a negative 20.8 per cent ratio.

Mr. Aqel calculated the percentage of credits to total deposits and ranked the Arab Bank, the Union Bank for Saving and Investment and Citibank at the top of the list with 34.9 per cent, 37.7 per cent and 38.6 per cent respectively.

The general average was 50.2 per cent although the ratio was as high as 80.5 per cent for the Exports and Finance Bank and 79.5 per cent for the Middle East Investment Bank.

Other high ratios were posted by the Jordan Gulf Bank (74.1 per cent), the Housing Bank (71.0 per cent) and the Arab Land Bank (70.4 per cent).

Closer to the average was the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank (49.0 per cent) and the Jordan Kuwait Bank (56.4 per cent).

ANZ Grindlays at 45.2 per cent and the BritishBank at 60.0 per cent were not far from the average.

The Arab Bank stayed at the top in terms of pretax profit which amounted to JD42.5 million. The Housing Bank remained second place with JD10.4 million.

In 1995, the Jordan Islamic Bank ranked third but last year was pushed to fourth place by the BritishBank which recorded a JD6 million pretax profit. The Jordan Islamic Bank generated JD5.6 million and was followed by the Cairo Amman Bank (JD4.3 million).

Seven banks had their profits range between JD3.3 million and JD1.2 million leaving the Middle East Investment Bank, the Arab Land Bank and the Exports and Finance Bank with a combined JD1.8 million pretax profit.

Losses were incurred by the Union Bank for Saving and Investment (JD0.8 million) and the Philadelphia Investment Bank (JD1.8 million).

According to the analysis, the total pretax profit for all the banks amounted to JD86.2 million.

When the average return in relation to the shareholders' equity was calculated the Arab Bank came on top at 47.0 per cent and was followed by the BritishBank (43.3 per cent) and ANZ Grindlays (28.9 per cent).

The Cairo Amman Bank and the Bank of Jordan came in third and fourth as the average return to equity was 18.5 per cent and 17.6 per cent respectively.

Below the 10 per cent level, the Middle East Investment Bank, the Jordan Kuwait Bank, the Arab Land Bank and the Exports and Finance Bank were in the low range.

Ranking the banks in terms of the average return to paid-up capital, the figures were 96.6 per cent for the Arab Bank, 80.0 per cent for the BritishBank, 45.5 per cent for the Cairo Amman Bank, 43.0 per cent for the Housing Bank, 41.6 per cent for the Jordan Islamic Bank and 38.4 per cent for the Bank of Jordan.

Measuring the average return to assets, the BritishBank scored the highest 2.9 per cent mark. In second place was

the Exports and Finance Bank (2.3 per cent) followed by ANZ Grindlays (1.7 per cent) and the Arab Bank (1.6 per cent).

The lowest figures were posted by the Arab Land Bank (0.5 per cent) and the Jordan Kuwait Bank (0.6 per cent) with the remaining ten banks ranging between 1.3 per cent (Jordan Investment and Finance Bank) and 0.9 per cent (the Housing Bank and the Jordan Islamic Bank).

In terms of efficiency, the analysis showed the following ranking and the amount spent for every JD1,000 of income.

1) Jordan Investment Bank and Finance Bank	JD815
2) BritishBank	JD833
3) Arab Bank	JD1,024
4) ANZ Grindlays	JD1,485
5) Citibank	JD1,833
6) Arab Banking Corporation (Jordan)	JD2,048
7) Arab Jordan Investment Bank	JD2,158
8) Jordan Islamic Bank	JD2,554
9) Cairo Amman Bank	JD3,000
10) Exports and Finance Bank	JD3,000
11) Housing Bank	JD3,337
12) Middle East Investment Bank	JD3,375
13) Bank of Jordan	JD3,650
14) Jordan Gulf Bank	JD4,933
15) Jordan Kuwait Bank	JD6,667
16) Arab Land Bank	JD8,571

The analyst provided another table, shown below, by calculating the net pretax profit per each employee.

1) BritishBank	JD30,457
2) Jordan Investment and Finance Bank	JD26,471
3) Citibank	JD19,355
4) Arab Bank	JD18,965
5) ANZ Grindlays	JD15,789
6) Exports and Finance Bank	JD10,714
7) Arab Banking Corporation (Jordan)	JD7,527
8) Arab Jordan Investment Bank	JD6,507
9) Cairo Amman Bank	JD5,422
10) Jordan Islamic Bank	JD4,694
11) Housing Bank	JD4,330
12) Middle East Investment Bank	JD3,556
13) Bank of Jordan	JD3,241
14) Jordan Gulf Bank	JD2,400
15) Jordan Kuwait Bank	JD2,351
16) Arab Land Bank	JD1,609
17) Union Bank for Saving and Investment	JD2,299
18) Philadelphia Investment Bank	JD1,476

The last table included in the analysis showed the rankings in terms of average assets per employee. Heading the list was the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank with JD2,008 and was followed by Citibank (JD1,652) and the Arab Bank (JD1,171). The BritishBank, at JD1,035, was in fourth place.

Most of the banks were in the JD450 to JD550 range with the exception of the ANZ Grindlays which posted JD913 and the Arab Banking Corporation which registered JD624.

The banks in the lowest category were: The Jordan Kuwait Bank (JD409), the Bank of Jordan (JD327), the Arab Land Bank (JD295), the Jordan Gulf Bank (JD281) and the Middle East Investment Bank (JD272).

Mr. Aqel concluded by pointing out that the Arab Bank distributed dividends at the rate of 40 per cent and that the other three banks that distributed dividends for 1996 were: The Bank of Jordan (29 per cent), the Housing Bank (20 per cent) and the Jordan Islamic Bank (12 per cent).

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates						Prices as of 29/11/97 19:12			
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7644	0.5921	1.4254	127.60	1.4261	1727.00	1.9820	6.5950
DE Mark	0.5668	-	0.3353	0.8078	72.30	0.8074	978.41	1.1233	3.3464
GB Sterling	1.6890	2.9800	-	2.3998	215.29	2.4070	2916.90	3.3476	9.9735
CH Franc	0.7016	123.70	0.4150	-	89.48	0.9991	1210.74	139.39	4.1398
JP Yen	0.0078	1.3822	0.4837	1.1166	-	1.1164	13.63	155.27	4.6269
CA Dollar	0.7017	1.2369	0.4197	1.0007	1.12	-	1213.86	139.63	4.1460
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0211	0.3426	0.8825	1955.38	0.8247	-	11.47	3.4472
NL Guilder	0.5045	98.98	0.2985	71.91	64.33	0.7187	870.90	-	2.9778
-FR Franc	0.1693	0.2987	0.1002	24.1307	21.58	0.2413	33.55	33.5500	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7085	3.7905	0.3770	3.6400	0.3037	3.6729	1624.00	3.3930
Jordan Dinar	1.4114	-	6.2936	0.5321	5.1376	0.4287	6.1841	2151.02	4.7890
Saudi Riyal	0.2668	0.1889	-	0.1006	0.97	0.0810	0.98	406.35	9.9047
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8794	9.9485	-	9.66	0.8066	9.74	420.65	8.0002
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1846	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0834	1.01	418.88	0.9321
Kuwait Dinar	3.2927	2.3329	12.3484	1.2413	11.98	-	12.09	5018.11	0.9321
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0206	0.9910	0.0827	-	414.93	0.9328
Lebanese/1000	0.56	0.4649	2.4610	0.2474	2.3895	0.1993	2.4100	-	2.2264
Egyptian	0.2947	0.2088	1.1054	0.1111	1.0728	0.0895	1.0825	449.16	-

* JOD Cross Rates					
Currency	Buy	Sell			
US Dollar	0.708	0.710			
GB Sterling	1.1942	1.2002			
DE Mark	0.4011	0.4031			
CH Franc	0.9959	0.9984			
FR Franc	0.1198	0.1204			

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4708	0.16785	0.38033	34.0368
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48058	0.1612	0.38936	34.7548
KW Dinar	3.2927	5.81058	1.9457	4.69704	420.345
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.68165	1.5706	3.78358	338.638
CY Pound	1.9304	3.406	1.1428	2.7516	246.319

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARISANI
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607172
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 29/11/1997

	LAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
	346.000	249.000	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	6	560	184815	330.00	330.25	.25+
N	2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	0.0	0.00	6	1600	2977	1.86	1.87	.01+
S	3.600	1.900	BANK OF JORDAN	6.3	0.00	11	14142	27999	1.92	2.00	.08+
	1.190	0.890	MID-EAST INV. BK.	68.3	0.00	2	1800	1872	1.04	1.04	-
	2.680	1.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.2	6.13	2	400	1032	2.60	2.58	.02-
	5.200	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.5	3.74	5	2500	12978	5.15	5.19	.04+
S	4.180	1.850	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	10.5	0.00	1	400	768	1.94	1.97	.03+
	1.050	0.740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.5	9.21	7	20000	15250	7.77	7.76	.01-
	4.190	3.450	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	20.1	0.00	2	10050	42110	4.19	4.19	-
S	4.050	2.900	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.2	3.21	21	5260	15644	2.97	2.99	.02+
	1.530	1.110	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	0.0	0.00	9	53350	61353	1.17	1.15	.02-
	1.900	0.870	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITRA)	6	16.85	1	250	223	0.90	0.89	.01-
	5.150	3.370	ARAB BANKING CO.	18.1	0.00	4	1094	4095	3.57	3.75	.18+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 237.79	%CHG: +0.22	77	111406	371133				
	2.950	2.700	JORDAN INSURANCE	11.8	5.45	5	6079	16714	2.75	2.75	-
	2.350	1.820	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	6.1	4.78	2	120	228	1.95	1.90	.05-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 115.15	%CHG: -0.27	7	6199	16942				
	2.050	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PH.	9.3	5.21	12	30550	58644	1.90	1.92	.02+
	0.810	0.480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	26.7	0.00	1	600	312	0.52	0.52	-
	6.830	3.900	AD-DUSTOUR	27.7	3.77	3	1100	7304	6.32	6.64	.32+
	1.680	1.150	MID-EAST HOTELS	19.8	0.00	3	950	1233	1.30	1.30	-
	3.900	2.890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.8	0.00	4	2050	7685	3.74	3.75	.01+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 108.81	%CHG: +0.24	24	35275	75204				
I	1.050	.930	ATTARQUEH	9	0.00	2	300	330	1.05	1.10	.05+
	4.450	3.010	JOR. COBALT FACT.	20.8	3.86	11	2716	8390	3.10	3.09	.01-
	7.050	5.570	ARAB POTASH CO.	3.1	5.15	5	1000	1816	6.40	6.35	.05-
	11.160	9.000	JOR. PETROL-REFINERY	10.3	8.35	6	4070	43827	10.70	10.65	.05-
	7.000	4.500	JORDAN TANNING	619	5.29	2	82	460	5.67	5.67	-
	3.260	1.330	JORDAN CEMENT AGR.	6	0.00	2	1600	2458	1.56	1.54	.04-
	4.700	3.300	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.6	4.75	5	4450	14490	4.46	4.20	.26-
	.690	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.9	0.00	4	3750	1763	4.47	4.47	-
	1.230	.800	ARAB PAPER CO-IND.	25.1	0.00	5	1250	1025	1.83	1.82	.01-
	1.200	.470	INTERVED. PETRO. CHEM.	10.0	0.00	4	1000	470	4.47	4.47	-
	.920	.530	JOR. ROCEMOLD INDS.	9	0.00	1	500	290	1.58	1.58	-
	.890	.530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	3	2000	1240	1.62	1.62	-
	1.260	.670	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	14.2	5.11	1	500	635	1.31	1.27	.04-
S	1.080	.930	UNIV. MOON INDS.	9	.23	7	2500	2325	.93	.93	-
	1.410	.790	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	10.6	12.66	2	2000	1580	1.79	1.79	-
	1.620	.120	NATL. CHLORINE	14.3	4.53	50	760	1560	1.52	1.52	-
	1.070	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	8	13200	11680	1.90	1.90	-
	2.090	1.340	EL. -2AY, READY WEAR	25.0	0.00	1	500	210	1.44	1.42	.02-
	1.320	1.140	EL. -7AY, TOBACCO	17.7	0.00	8	1000	2265	1.34	1.22	.01-
	.840	.570	MID-EAST COMPLEX	8.75	16.39	7	6300	3643	1.63	1.61	.02-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 116.51	%CHG: -0.48	75	48145	99120				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 171.25	%CHG: -0.03	183	201025	562399				

Iran snatch World Cup place from stunned Australians

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Iran fought back from two goals down here Saturday to snatch a 2-2 draw against Australia and take the last place in next year's World Cup finals.

The two match play off ended 3-3 on aggregate but Iran go through on the away goals rule, even though they were forced to desperately defend for much of the game.

Karim Bagheri and Khodadad Azizi, who scored late goals to level the match, danced with joy as the Iranian team carried out a lap of honour in front of the stunned 85,022 crowd in the giant Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Iran join Japan, Saudi Arabia and South Korea as Asia's representatives at France '98. Their only previous appearance at the finals was in Argentina in 1978.

The Australians, who hired former England manager Terry Venables on an expensive contract for the World Cup campaign, slumped to the ground in disbelief.

Venables said he had never been at a game like it. "We terrorised them for a lot of the time. It was a cruel result."

Iran's Brazilian coach Valdir Vieira apologised to his counterpart at the after-match press conference. Vieira's side qualified even though they did not win any of their last six World Cup matches.

Harry Kewell and Aurelio Vidmar put Australia ahead and the home side dominated the game.

But Australia paid for a series of crucial misses in a frenzied opening 10 minutes of the match which they started as favourites after the 1-1 draw in Tehran last weekend.

Vidmar missed two open goals in the first minute,



Australia's Mark Viduka (R) fights for the ball against Iran's Madhi Mahdavia during the soccer World Cup qualifying match in Melbourne November 29. The match ended in a 2-2 draw making Iran the last team to qualify for the 1998 World Cup in France (Reuters photo)

Glasgow Rangers defender Craig Moore saw a shot cleared off the line by Mohammad Khakpour in the fourth minute, goalkeeper Reza Abedzadeh just tipped over a Stan Lazaridis cross and Kewell had a ninth minute shot headed off the line by Mehdi Pasharzadeh.

Leeds United striker Kewell, who got Australia's goal in Tehran last week, scored in the 32nd minute. A Vidmar cross went straight across a goalmouth scramble and the 19-year-old was waiting at the back to blast in.

Australia extended the lead when Aurelio Vidmar fired home after a goalmouth scramble, sending the crowd in raptures in anticipation of Australia reaching the finals for the first time since West Germany in 1974.

The match was held up for eight minutes after a fan jumped on the goal net dur-

ing the premature celebrations. The fan was led away by police who also helped tie the net back to the crossbar.

Iran, always unpredictable, slowly crept back into the match. In the 76th minute, Azizi launched a raid down the right was tackled but won back the ball and crossed to Bagheri who shot into an empty net.

Three minutes later centre forward Ali Daei put through Azizi. Asia's player of the year, who won a man-to-man challenge against Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich and slotted home.

Azizi jumped over the advertising hoardings to get to 5,000 expatriate Iranian supporters in the ground. When the game eventually restarted Iran had some final nervous moments, especially when Australian substitute Graham Arnold's header forced a spectacular save from Abedzadeh. But

they held on.

Venables said "We looked as good as anyone will see. But that's football. It's unbelievable. I have not witnessed a game like it. We did everything but finish them off."

He likened the feeling of defeat to when England were beaten in the semi-finals of the European Championships last year. Soccer Australia president David Hill said Venables would be offered a new deal as the federation wanted to keep him, possibly with an eye on the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Venables was to name a squad on Sunday for a tournament in Saudi Arabia next month.

Vieira who was brought in as coach last month to halt Iran's run of defeats has no fixed deal with the Iranian federation. "I can't ask them for a contract. They will have to offer it to me," he said.

France 1998 World Cup qualifiers

PARIS (AFP) — Complete list of qualifiers for the 1998 World Cup in France

- Africa — Cameroon, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Tunisia.
- Asia/Oceania — Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Iran.
- CONCACAF — Jamaica, Mexico, United States.
- Europe — Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, England, France (hosts), Germany, Italy, Holland, Norway, Romania, Scotland, Spain, Yugoslavia.
- South America — Argentina, Brazil (defending champions), Colombia, Paraguay, Chile.

Bulls lose; Suns beat Celtics

BOSTON (AP) — Rex Chapman scored five of his 24 points in overtime Friday night as Phoenix beat the Boston Celtics 112-108, giving the Suns their best start in 15 years.

Jason Kidd had 10 assists for the Suns, who improved to 9-2, their best start since 1982-83 and the second-best start in franchise history.

Clifford Robinson, a last-minute addition to the starting lineup, had a season-high 26 points.

Celtics rookie Ron Mercer had a career-high 26 points and Antoine Walker had 27 with 11 rebounds.

Cavaliers 97, Hornets 91: In Charlotte, North Carolina, Wesley Person matched his career-high with 33 points and Cleveland harassed Charlotte into a season-high 25 turnovers to halt the Hornets' five-game winning streak.

Shawn Kemp added 13 points and 11 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who converted Charlotte's miscues into 29 points on the way to winning their fourth consecutive game.

Person also had a strong night on defence. He spent much of his time guarding Glen Rice, who came in averaging 23 points, fifth-best in the NBA. Rice had just one field goal in the first half and wound up with 14 points on 3-for-11 shooting.

76ers 105, Lakers 95: In Philadelphia, Allen Iverson scored 31 points and Philadelphia handed Los Angeles its second loss of the season.

Iverson also had eight assists and Jim Jackson had 16 points, eight rebounds and nine assists. Eric Montross even had a rare productive night, emerging from a season-long slump with eight points and 12 rebounds. The 76ers out-rebounded the Lakers 51-35.

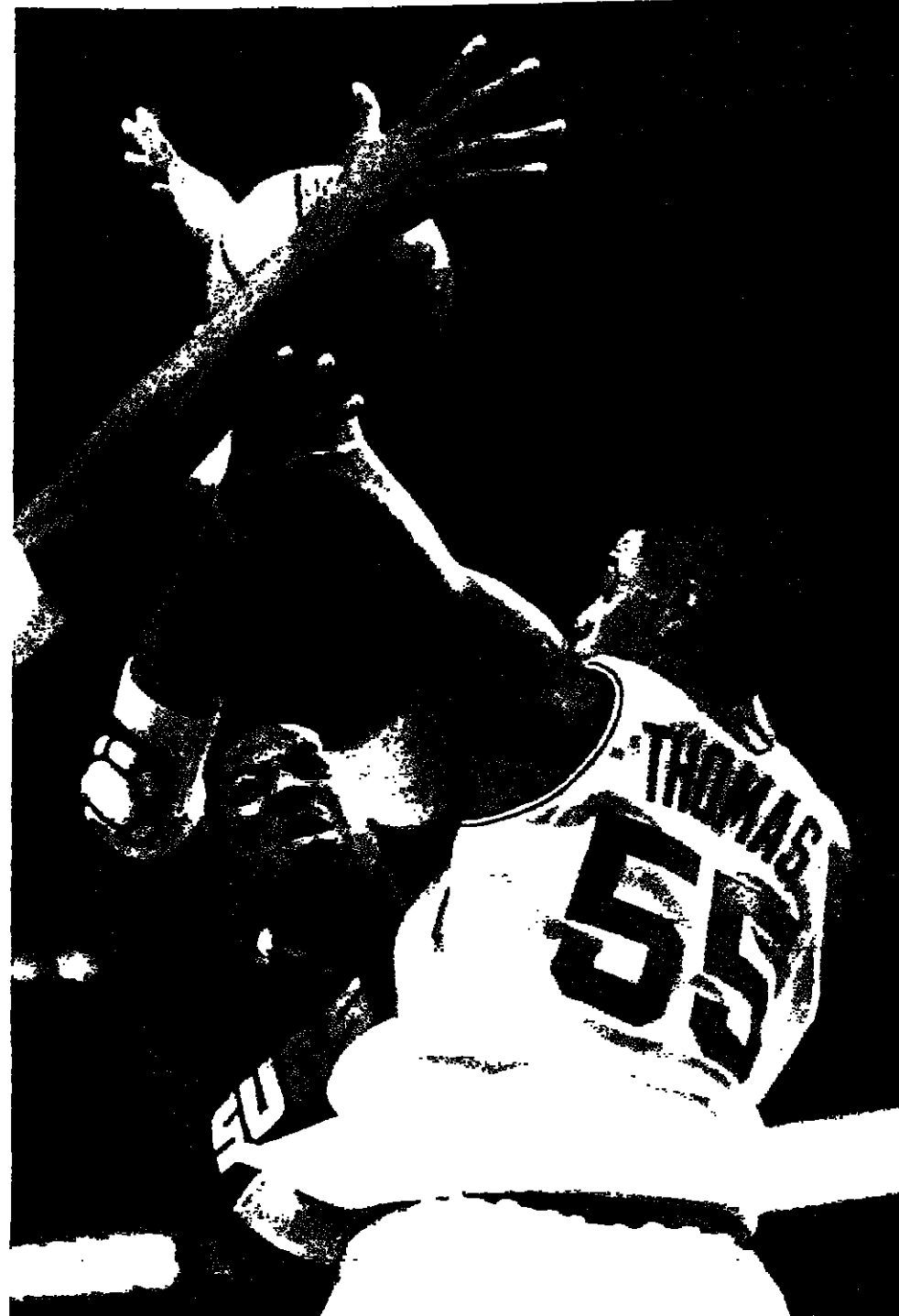
The Lakers were led by Elden Campbell and Kobe Bryant with 19 points each.

Pacers 94, Bulls 83: In Indianapolis, Reggie Miller scored 24 points, including two layups around Michael Jordan during a decisive third quarter run, as Indiana defeated Chicago.

Jordan had 26 points and moved into fourth place on the NBA's career scoring list, passing Elvin Hayes. He finished the game with 27,332 points.

The loss dropped Chicago to 8-7, a far cry from last season when the Bulls didn't lose their seventh game until their 56th of the season. Indiana, meanwhile, climbed above .500 for the first time since they were 13-12 last season.

Magic 94, Bucks 90: In Orlando, Florida, Mark Price scored 22 points and Bo outlaw led a strong fourth-quarter defensive effort that enabled Orlando to hold off Milwaukee.



Phoenix Suns' Cedric Ceballos (L) tries unsuccessfully to mangle this shot past Boston Celtics' John Thomas (R) in first half NBA action in Boston (Reuters photo)

Price made four free throws in the final 10.5 seconds and outlaw blocked four shots in the final period.

Derek Strong's only basket of the second half put Orlando ahead for good, and Penny Hardaway's lone field goal of the fourth quarter made it 89-85 with 1:09 to go.

Hardaway finished with 19 points and eight assists, while outlaw had 15 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks.

Mavericks 93, Raptors 91: In Dallas, Dennis Scott scored 21 points and Australian rookie Chris Anstey came off the bench to contribute six key fourth-quarter points as Dallas snapped a 10-game losing streak and handed Toronto its 12th consecutive loss.

Anstey, acquired in a draft-day trade, hit an 18-foot jumper from the right corner with 6:11 remaining to put the Mavericks ahead for good, 83-82.

Toronto had a shot at the tie, but Damon Stoudamire missed a layup with 4 seconds left and Shawn Respert missed a 3-pointer from the right wing at the buzzer.

Pistons 86, Knicks 78: In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Joe Dumars hit two key 3-pointers in the fourth quarter and Detroit overcame a 19-point deficit to defeat New York.

Dumars, who finished with 13 points, put the pistons ahead to stay, 75-72, with a 3-pointer from the left side with 3:26 remaining.

Patrick Ewing, who frus-

trated Detroit through the early going, had 27 points for the Knicks, but none down the stretch. New York shot just 3-for-19 in the fourth quarter.

Jazz 111, Warriors 82: In Salt Lake City, Karl Malone scored 21 points and Greg Foster added a season-high 18 as Utah routed Golden State.

The Jazz led by 30 points in the first half on the way to their third straight win, while the Warriors lost for the 12th time in their first 13 games.

Latrell Sprewell led Golden State with 30 points and Donyell Marshall had 15. Adam Keefe and Jeff Hornacek added 12 apiece for the Jazz.

Nuggets 95, Timberwolves 84: In Denver, Johnny Newman scored a season-high 31 points as Denver ended the worst start in franchise history.

Bobby Jackson added 14 points and Dean Garrett had 10 points and 16 rebounds for the Nuggets, who had lost 12 straight to open the season. The NBA record is 0-17 by the 1988-89 Miami Heat.

The Nuggets gained the victory despite shooting a season-low 37 per cent.

Tom Gugliotta had 18 points and 12 rebounds and Kevin Garnett added 17 for the Timberwolves, losers of five straight.

Supersonics 113, Kings 96: In Seattle, Vin Baker scored 21 points and Gary Payton had 15 points and 14 assists as Seattle won its sixth straight.

The Sonics led by two at halftime but took command

by outscoring the Kings 25-18 during the third quarter for a 91-72 lead after three periods.

Detlef Schrempf had 18 points and Dale Ellis came off the bench and matched his season-high with 16 points.

Mitch Richmond led the Kings with 21 points.

Rockets 98, Trail Blazers 89: In Portland, Oregon, Eddie Johnson scored nine of his 21 points during a brief stretch of the fourth quarter to break open a close game and lead Houston over Portland.

Houston, which has won four straight, led 81-80 when the 38-year-old Johnson made four free throws, a 20-foot jumper and a 3-point basket to put the Rockets ahead 90-83 with 4:30 left.

The Blazers, who couldn't get closer than seven points during the last two minutes, were led by Isaiah Rider's 20 points.

Nets 104, Clippers 92: In Anaheim, California, Sam Cassell and Kerry Kittles each had 10-point fourth quarters and finished with 25 points as New Jersey improved its best start ever to 9-5.

The Nets broke the club record for wins in November, set in 1979. The Clippers have lost seven consecutive games against Eastern Conference opponents since beating the nets last April 6 at the Meadowlands.

Brent Barry had 16 points for the Clippers, who have lost 13 of their first 15.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Bjorkman enters Sydney International tournament

SYDNEY (AFP) — Sweden's World No.4 Jonas Bjorkman has been confirmed here as a starter in January's Sydney international tennis tournament at White City. The Swedish Davis Cup player, with 69 victories, has won more matches than any other player on this year's ATP Tour. "I am really happy to start in Sydney," Bjorkman said from Gothenburg where he defeated Michael Chang to help give Sweden a 2-0 first day singles lead over the United States in the Davis Cup final Friday. "It has been a long year but a very exciting one," he said. "If anyone had told me in January that I would be in the top five, win three titles, play in the ATP Tour World Championships and been in the Davis Cup final, I would have wondered where they had been. It's a very exciting time in my career and I am looking forward to playing some great tennis in Sydney." The Sydney International, from January 11 to 17, has Australia's Patrick Rafter as its number one seed.

FIFA urges free coverage

MUNICH (AFP) — Football's world governing body FIFA is against pay TV station coverage of the 2002 and 2006 World Cups and is planning to ensure free-to-air television coverage. In an interview to be published in Saturday's Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper, FIFA's general secretary Sepp Blatter said FIFA wanted to guarantee free transmission of World Cup matches on terrestrial channels. This proposal goes against the plans of German TV magnate Leo Kirch, who announced last month he would be negotiating for television rights after the 1998 finals. Kirch's plans were for most matches — apart from the opening match, the semi-finals and finals — to be televised on pay channels.

Sao Paulo in final

SANTIAGO (AFP) — Brazil's Sao Paulo reached the final of the South American Super Cup beating Chile's Colo Colo 1-0 in a second-leg match here for a 4-1 aggregate victory. Sao Paulo will meet Argentina's River Plate in the final with the first leg in Sao Paulo on December 3 and the return on December 17 in Buenos Aires.

France '98 songs to be unveiled at draw

MARSEILLE (AFP) — The official song of the France 98 committee and the World Cup song will both be revealed at the draw at the Velodrome stadium here on December 4. The committee song was written by Senegalese pop star Youssou N'Dour, who sings it in French with Belgian singer Axelle Red. The World Cup song will be interpreted by Ricky Martin.

Hamed's fight to go ahead

LONDON (AFP) — Prince Naseem Hamed's WBO featherweight title defence against American Kevin Kelley in New York on December 19 will not be stopped by legal action, promoter Frank Warren said Friday. A dispute between Hamed's promoter Warren and rival Don King triggered court proceedings, but a statement released by Warren said any problems regarding the Madison Square Garden bouts had been resolved. The statement read: "Don King has conceded that he has no right to prevent Frank Warren's promotion in New York featuring Naseem Hamed. He has also notified Frank Warren that he accepts that the partnership between them is at an end."

Gascoigne keen to avoid gaffes

LONDON (AFP) — England star Paul Gascoigne said Saturday he is determined to not let events in his private life cost him the chance to go into football management.

And the 30-year-old Rangers midfielder believes the mistakes he has made on and off the pitch during his controversial career have cost him the chance to captain England.

"I want enjoy my next few years and then have a break from it until I want to come back and hopefully be a coach or in management," said Gascoigne.

"I wouldn't mind a crack at that. It would be fun but I have done a few daft things in my career so I have to earn the respect of everybody — and I'll do that. There will be no problem with that."

"Sometimes I look back and I could kick myself for things I did on the pitch and some of the things I did off the pitch."

"I always thought when I was young that there could have been the chance to be captain of England, or captain of Rangers."

With the prospect of playing in another World Cup in France next year, he is determined that keeping a lower-profile private life will help him concentrate on lengthening his playing career.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 699238	CINEMA TEL: 677420	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	
	Chris O'Donnell & Jene Hackman ... in	Charles Grodin ... in	Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in	CONCORD "1" Rowan Atkinson... in	ABDOUN Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in	ABDOUN	NOW ON DAILY
	THE CHAMBER	BEETHOVEN'S 2ND	AL MASEER	MR. BEAN	AL MASEER	NOTHING TO LOSE	THE GOVERNMENT IN
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, THE BEAUTICIAN & THE BEAST	(Arabic) Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE
	Shows: 8:30, 10:30		CONCORD "2" SLEEP WALKERS	Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45	Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45	Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas	
			Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only				For reservations call: 640155, 625155

Kingdom will continue to back Palestinians' endeavours until they realise aspirations — King

NEW YORK (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein said in a message addressed to the United Nations that "without peace there can be no room for progress and development and without the establishment of justice, peace will have no meaning and cannot last."

In his message to the U.N. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the eve of the world's observance of the International Day for Solidarity with the Palestinians to be held this year on Dec. 1, the King said "our support for the Palestinian people to help

them regain their rights will continue at all forums and on all levels."

"We support the Palestinians [in their quest] to regain their rights in their national homeland and will continue to back their endeavours until they realise their national aspirations," added the King.

"When our efforts to establish just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East achieved some success, we had expected with great hope and optimism to see the success leave some positive impact on the Palestinian people's problem and inalienable rights including the right to

determining their fate on their national soil. But the months and the years went by without witnessing any change and, regrettably, the Palestinians' suffering and pain have been increasing and aggravated by the day," the King pointed out.

He said that the world community and the U.N. have a duty to help solve the Palestine problem until the Palestinians regain their legitimate rights.

The King pointed out that "the peoples of the Middle East region have suffered a great deal over past decades and they have wasted their resources and potentials because of the

absence of peace."

"Now that the winds of peace have started to blow towards the Middle East, the world community is invited to support justice and what is right so that real peace can be established and prevail in the whole region," the King said.

The King expressed his appreciation of the world community's relentless efforts to help achieve the aspired goal of enabling the Palestinian people attain their full and inalienable rights including their right of determining their fate on their national soil.

Iraq offers dialogue, warns of time-bomb on inspections

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq on Saturday offered dialogue with the United Nations on the issue of access to "sensitive" sites which it warned was a time-bomb, as U.N. weapons experts started a second week of inspections.

A U.S. spy plane, meanwhile, overflew Iraq for the fourth time during the month-long crisis over arms inspections, despite past Iraqi threats to shoot it down, the official news agency INA said.

The high-altitude plane is used to back up the work of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of dismantling Iraq's

The U-2 entered Iraqi airspace from the south, flew over Karbala and headed north up to Arbil before returning, INA said. "Iraq's air defences followed the movement of the plane from the moment it entered Iraqi airspace."

The official newspaper Al Jumhuriya, meanwhile, said that Baghdad "wants to reach a solution through negotiation and dialogue, not by a resort to force."

The Iraqi leadership is "ready to discuss the outstanding issues in an open spirit, so long as the other party is prepared to be objective and neutral," said the paper.

Iraq's offer to open its presidential palaces to U.N. delegates has "put the ball in the camp of the [U.N.] Security Council" and it should

"seize this opportunity to defuse the bomb which America wants to see explode," it said. The UNSCOM weapons inspectors started a second week of inspections on Saturday. INA said the work went smoothly and that UNSCOM visited 20 sites.

Iraqi officials said Friday that UNSCOM had inspected a total of 96 sites in seven days, after a three-week break because of an Iraqi ban on U.S. members of UNSCOM. The inspections have so far been free of incident. The Commission resumed its work on Nov. 22 after Baghdad lifted the ban and expelled U.S. nationals returned to Iraq together with their colleagues who had been evacuated.

Western diplomats at the United Nations said U.S. and Russian diplomats were working on a draft text to present a unified Security Council response next week to Iraq's latest offer. Iraq's proposal was aimed at dividing the Security Council, where permanent members China, France and Russia are more sympathetic toward Baghdad than hardliners Britain and the United States, the diplomats said. U.N. sanctions in force since Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 cannot be lifted until UNSCOM certifies it has eliminated Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction.

U.N. agencies in Baghdad this week launched a concerted effort aimed at increasing the oil-for-food provisions.

As a result, the council is expected to extend the deal at current levels for another six-month period, while expressing readiness to reconsider an adjustment at a later stage.

Iraq and the United Nations have been in a standoff since Oct. 29, when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein threatened to expel U.S. weapons inspectors.

Russia defused the crisis by persuading President Hussein to withdraw the threat, but tensions are still running high as the Iraqi leadership is continuing to deny access to the U.N. inspectors.

The sanctions can only be lifted when the U.N. inspectors certify that Iraq has dismantled all its weapons of mass destruction.

U.N. agencies in Baghdad this week launched a concerted effort aimed at increasing the oil-for-food provisions.

Annan fails to seek specific Iraq oil-for-food increase

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — U.N. chief Kofi Annan on Friday failed to recommend to the U.N. Security Council a specific increase in an oil-for-food deal with Iraq, ignoring the advice of aides in Baghdad.

A U.N. official said that Mr. Annan "is not recommending any specific figure" in his report on the oil-for-food scheme that is to be transmitted to the Security Council on Monday.

But he asks the 15-member Council to "consider the possibility of increasing the revenues" in the year-old arrangement aimed at easing the suffering of the Iraqi people from seven-year old sanctions, the official said.

"We need more aid," said another official. "But he [Annan] leaves it up to them," referring to the Council members.

Mr. Annan, according to U.N. sources, in an earlier draft of the report proposed increasing the oil-for-food deal from \$2 billion over the next six-month period to \$3 billion.

He finalised the report after talking on Friday to Benon Sevan, the U.N. official in charge of the arrangement's implementation, who has just returned from Iraq.

One U.N. source said that a "political tug of war" had gone on this week involving Mr. Annan's representatives in Baghdad and U.N. agencies, who were pressing for the revenues to be doubled to \$4 billion, and U.N. secretariat officials.

Mr. Annan's report, according to officials familiar with the document, points out that the current programme in force since last December is not adequate to meet the Iraqi population's basic needs.

The U.N. Security Council is due to discuss Mr. Annan's report next week before deciding whether to roll over the oil-for-food at existing levels for another six months when it expires on Dec. 5.

The arrangement provides for Iraq to export \$2 billion dollars worth of oil every six months, in return for badly-needed food and medical supplies to help the sanctions-hit Iraqi people.

Security Council diplomats said that after signalling a readiness to consider increasing the dollar amount to \$3 billion, Washington has now backed down fearing that it could be perceived as a concession to Baghdad.

As a result, the council is expected to extend the deal at current levels for another six-month period, while expressing readiness to reconsider an adjustment at a later stage.

Iraq and the United Nations have been in a standoff since Oct. 29, when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein threatened to expel U.S. weapons inspectors.

Russia defused the crisis by persuading President Hussein to withdraw the threat, but tensions are still running high as the Iraqi leadership is continuing to deny access to the U.N. inspectors.

The sanctions can only be lifted when the U.N. inspectors certify that Iraq has dismantled all its weapons of mass destruction.

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A masked Palestinian youth is carried away by friends after being shot by the Israeli army during a demonstration in Bethlehem, on Saturday (Reuters photo)

On 50th anniversary of partition vote Arafat calls for full U.N. status for PNA

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

(AFP) — The 50th anniversary Saturday of the U.N. vote to partition Palestine between Jewish and Arab states was marked with a public call for full U.N. status from the Palestinians, but low key Israeli celebrations.

"Palestine must be able to take part fully in all U.N. activities and U.N.-linked organisations," President Yasser Arafat said in an open letter to the United Nations published in Palestinian newspapers.

"Such complete participation would only strengthen efforts we are deploying to reach a full and total peace in the Middle East," said President Arafat.

While Jews had their wish for a homeland granted following the vote on Nov. 29, 1947, to divide the land then ruled by Britain under U.N. mandate, 50 years on the hopes of the Arabs are still in limbo.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation, which signed the interim peace accords with Israel, has observer status at the U.N., but the

National

Authority, which controls 70 per cent of the Gaza Strip but just three per cent of the West Bank, is not represented.

With peace talks that may lead to Palestinian statehood stalled for months, both the pro-Arafat Fatah and the Islamist opposition group Hamas, planned protest demonstrations marking the anniversary in the West Bank town of Nablus.

On the Israeli side, the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was planning few celebrations for the U.N. vote which led to the creation of a Jewish state in 1948, except for a reception for the ambassadors of those countries which approved it.

"We do not accept that 50 years on, we have to implement a resolution that was rejected at the time by the Arabs," Mr. Netanyahu said in the run-up to the anniversary.

In 1947, Arab nations at the U.N. rejected the partition plan calling instead for a "unitary, democratic and independent" Palestine.

Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo

invited the 33 ambassadors to a ceremony in the Hall of Independence where Zionist leader David Ben Gurion proclaimed the creation of the state of Israel in May 1948.

A ceremony was also to be held at David Ben Gurion Square in Tel Aviv where 50 years ago Jews danced with joy on hearing the result of the U.N. vote.

The U.N. director general in Geneva, Vladimir Petrovski, was expected to attend.

Despite special broadcasts on Israeli radio and television, the vast majority of Israelis remain unaware of the historic U.N. decision, according to an opinion poll published on Friday.

Just 17 per cent of Israeli Jews knew exactly what happened on Nov. 29, 1947, according to the poll in Jerusalem weekly newspaper Yerushalaim.

Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) thought Nov. 29 was the date of the proclamation of the Israeli state, which took place six months later.

Egypt rules out U.S., Israeli relation to Luxor massacre

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt has

ruled out any involvement of the Israeli or U.S. intelligence services in the Nov. 17 Luxor massacre in which 58 foreign tourists died.

President Hosni Mubarak's political adviser Ussama Baz told foreign journalists that, while this was "a popular theory" in Egypt, "as long as we have no information that could justify this conclusion one should not go after these wild interpretations."

He also saw no link between the killings and Egypt's boycott of the recent regional economic conference in Doha because of Israel's presence.

"We are leaving no stone unturned in our efforts to analyse the situation, to try to fill all the gaps, the loopholes we have discovered in the sys-

tem," Mr. Baz added.

Asked about steps being taken to secure the safety of foreign tourists, Mr. Baz said, "We cannot reveal the details of our measures and the reinforcement we have introduced to the security system."

But he added, "We feel that with the implementation of these measures it will be very unlikely to have any recurrence of terrorist operations, not only in respect to tourist sites but to all of Egypt."

"We are going to have both visible and invisible security," Mr. Baz said, adding, "We are not going to turn Egypt into a police state, we are not going to have a police officer on every corner, we are not in a state of war."

Mr. Baz said the government had obtained information that the killers were trained abroad but no formal proof.

"Some of them were veterans of the war in Afghanistan, some of them came to Egypt and some fled from Egypt long ago."

Egypt had been contacting "some of our European friends" for assistance, but "so far there has been a mixed response."

"Some countries have been forthcoming and cooperative and other countries were less enthusiastic to say the least. They cite either legal intricacies and difficulties or the fact that they claim that these people are not there."

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2 U.N. helicopters to help rescue 'from jaw of death' in Somalia

NAIROBI (R) — Two large

helicopters enlisted to help rescue victims of flooding in Somalia were due to arrive in Kenya on Saturday and should be in action by next week, a U.N. spokeswoman said.

The MI-18 helicopters loaded onto an Ilyushin plane would arrive in the Kenyan capital from the Ukraine at 6 p.m. local time and should be in use early next week, Lynn Geldof, spokeswoman for the U.N. Somalia Inter-Agency Flood Response said.

"These [helicopters] will be used to rescue people from the jaws of death, people who have been living in tree tops or are marooned, or who are seriously ill. They will also deliv-

er food," Ms. Geldof told Reuters.

"The whole operation has been seriously hampered by our inability to reach people and now with [the helicopters and] the Norwegian boats we should be able to get things moving," she said.

Norway last week donated 10 motor boats to the flood response.

Thirteen people have died in the last 24 hours in Somalia mainly from flood-related diseases, bringing the death toll since flooding began over a month ago to at least 1,487, Ms. Geldof said.

At least 230,000 people have been displaced by the flooding, while 21,000 head of

livestock and 60,000 hectares of crops and farmland have been destroyed, according to a statement by the Somalia aid coordination body, which groups U.N. and non-governmental aid agencies.

A total of six people were feared drowned and 500 left homeless because of flooding near Garissa, east Kenya, on Friday the privately-owned Kenya television network reported on Saturday.

The aid Agency Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said on Saturday IFO refugee camp in northeast Kenya was almost totally flooded. Around 40,000 Somali refugees live in three camps in the area.

'Dog Brain of Britain' crowned

LONDON (AFP) — Guide dog Dill was crowned "Dog Brain of Britain" Saturday after he showed how he could wake his owner when an alarm clock rang, fetch slippers and find keys concealed inside a washing machine. Dill, a three-year-old cocker spaniel, beat off competition from 75 other hounds, including one that plays football and another that does card tricks, to take the title at the competition in West London. But talk at the competition centred around why another finalist, Caela, a "talking" dog whose catchphrases include "I want water" and "I want home" and who was thought to be Dill's main rival, had failed to show. Organisers denied rumours that she had phoned sick.

Jumping Jack Flash, still a gas

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Any lingering doubts about the pulling power of ageing rock icons the Rolling Stones were dispelled when tickets for the only Dutch date in their current world tour sold out in just 25 minutes, despite a limit of eight tickets per person. "It was incredible," one of the Dutch organisers said. "We were on the telephone with the Stones' manager in London and we simply decided to organise additional concerts as we went along with the ticket sales." In the end, 200,000 tickets went in an hour, committing the British group to three extra concerts on Jul. 1, 2 and 5.

Elton John to sell designer outfits

LONDON (AFP) — Pop superstar Elton John is selling 10,000 of his often weird and wacky designer outfits to raise money for his AIDS charity. The singer will put the contents of scores of wardrobes on sale in London from Dec. 20 in aid of the Elton John AIDS Foundation. Britain's Mirror daily reported. As well as suits made by the likes of the late Gianni Versace, there will also be some of his flamboyant stage costumes.

Paris fashion show for women who don't fit in

PARIS (AFP) — Stylist Edmond Boubli is hosting a fashion show for those generously-proportioned women he says are ignored by other designers. Ten models from size 46 upwards will parade down the catwalk at the Paris show on Dec. 1. Figures show that one quarter of French women are at least size 46, and that 7.6 million of them are thought to be "ample."

Winston Churchill painting sold for \$240,000 at auction

LONDON (AFP) — A painting by former British prime minister Winston Churchill was sold for \$240,000, double its estimate, the Christie's auction house announced. The painting was entitled "Mimizan Landes", a reference to the Duke of Westminster's estate in Mimizan, in the Bordeaux region, where Churchill was often a guest. "This is a superb painting by Churchill," said Jonathan Horwich, head of Christie's department for contemporary paintings.

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